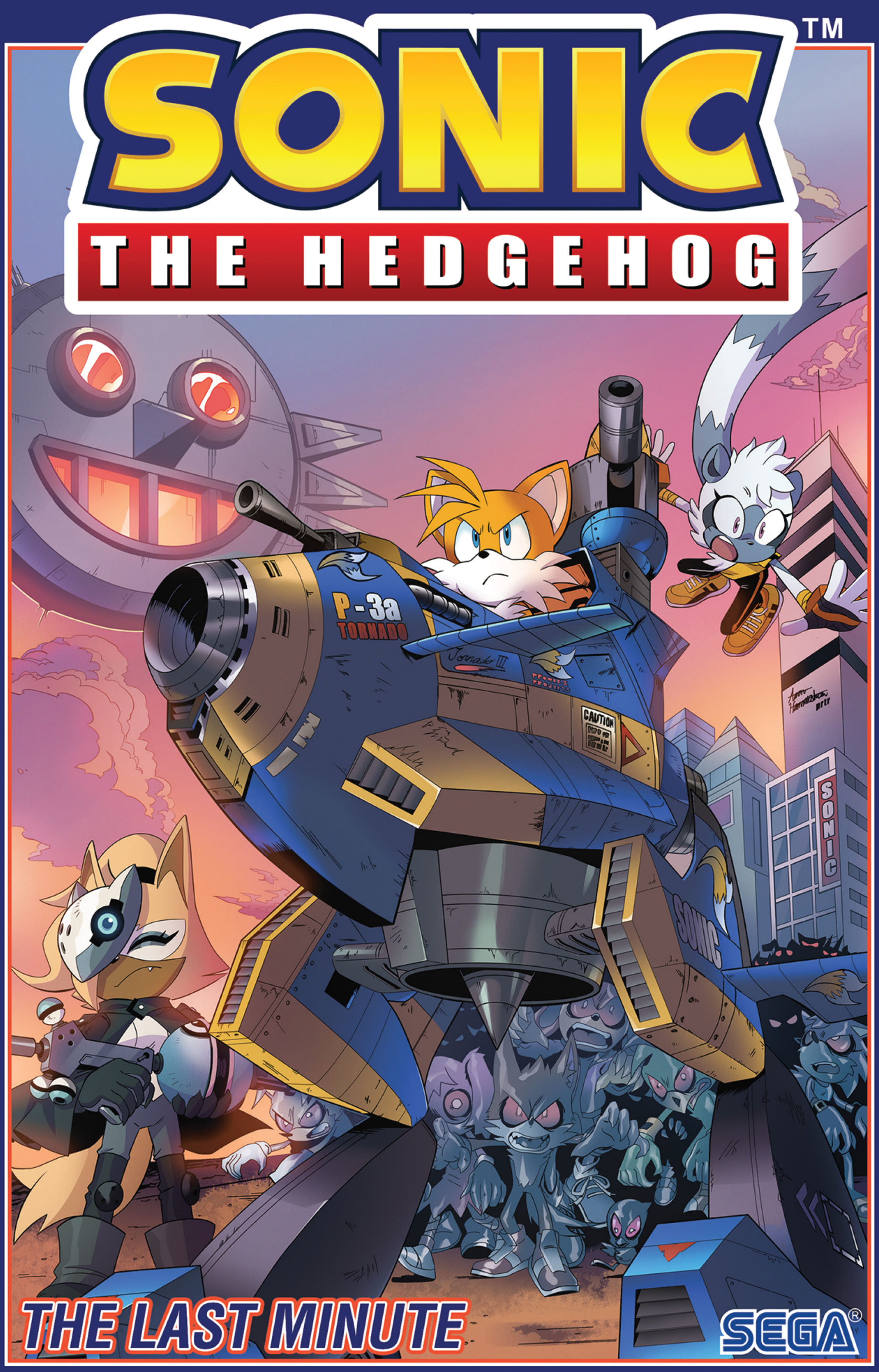
SONIC™ THE HEDGEHOG



SONIC™ THE HEDGEHOG

THE LAST MINUTE

SEGA®

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IAN FLYNN

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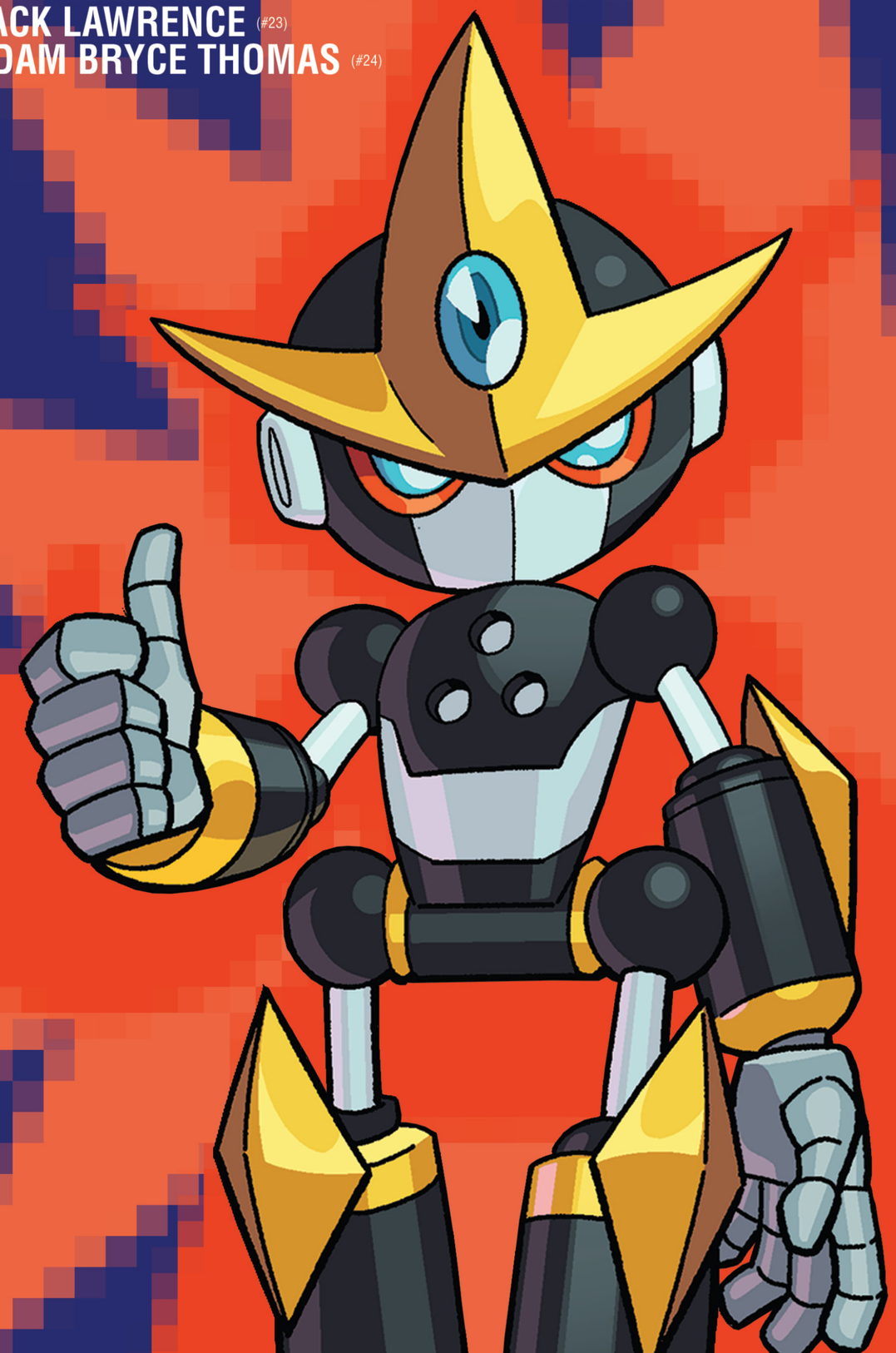
SHAWN LEE



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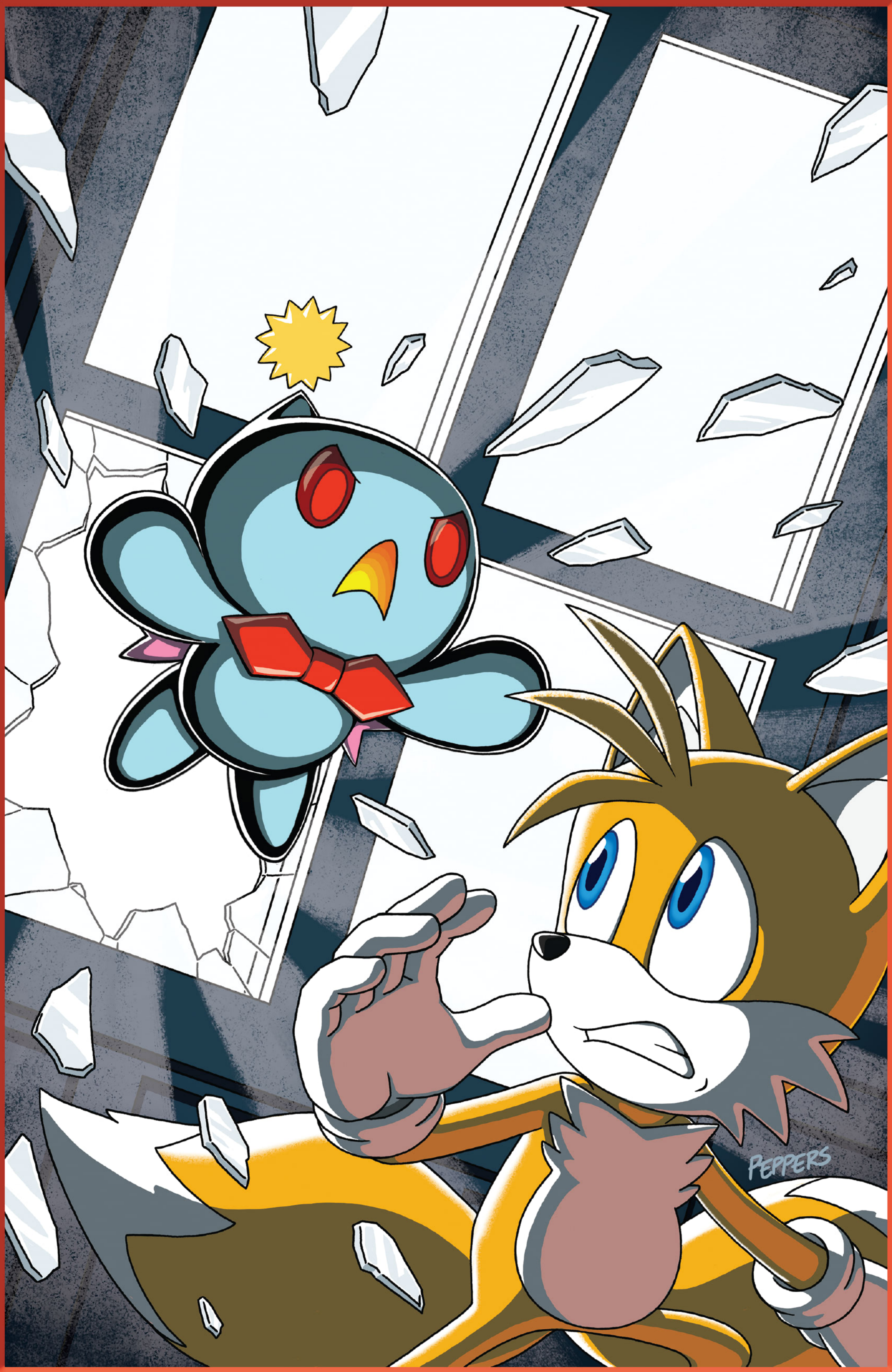
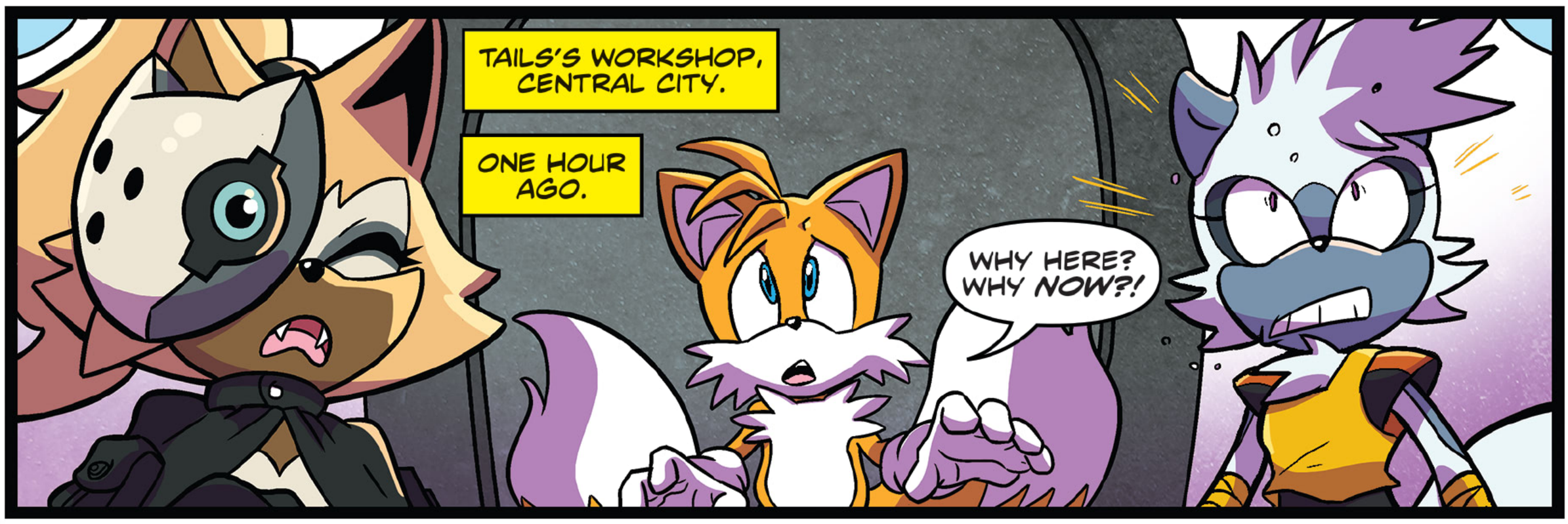
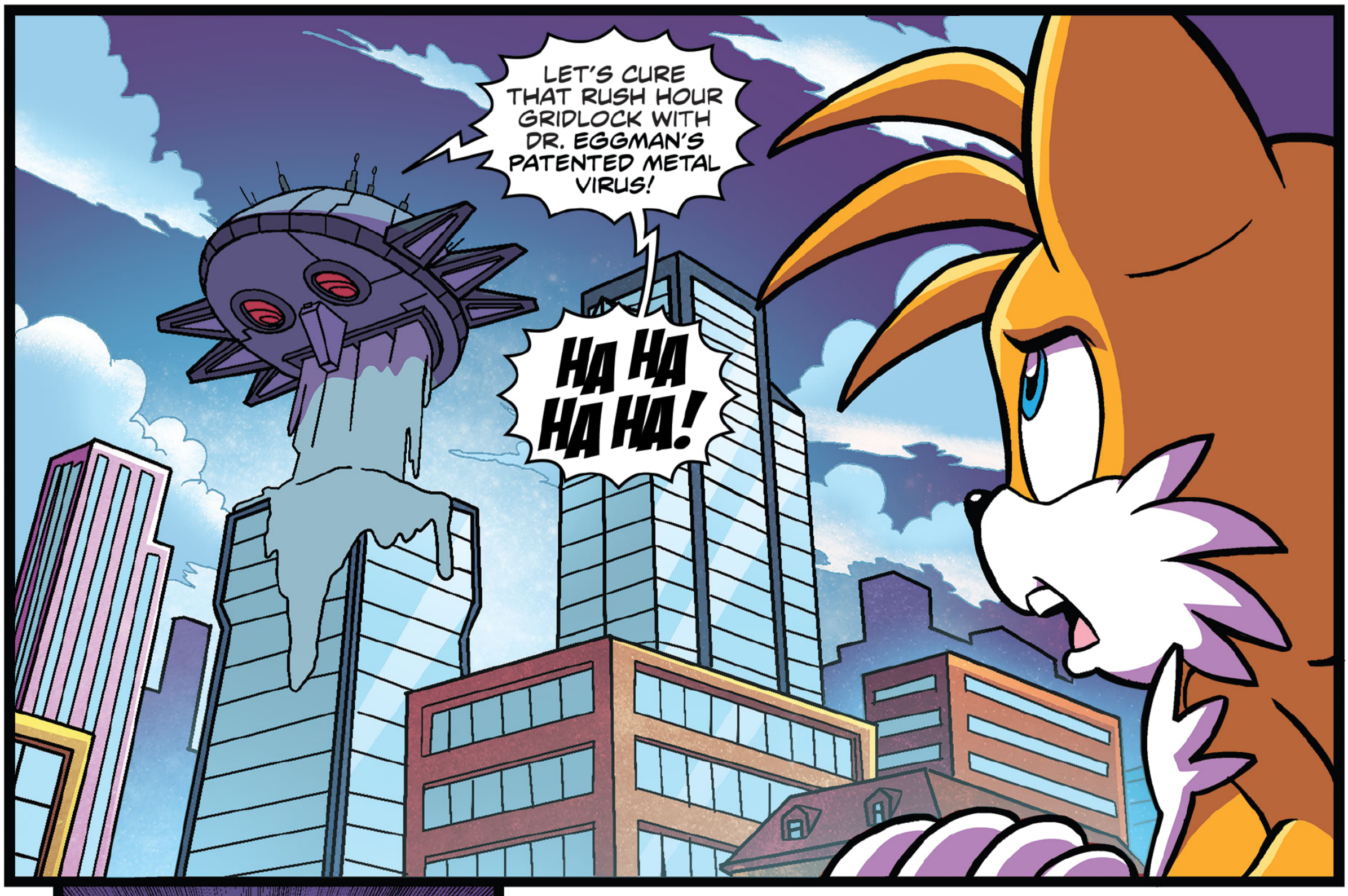
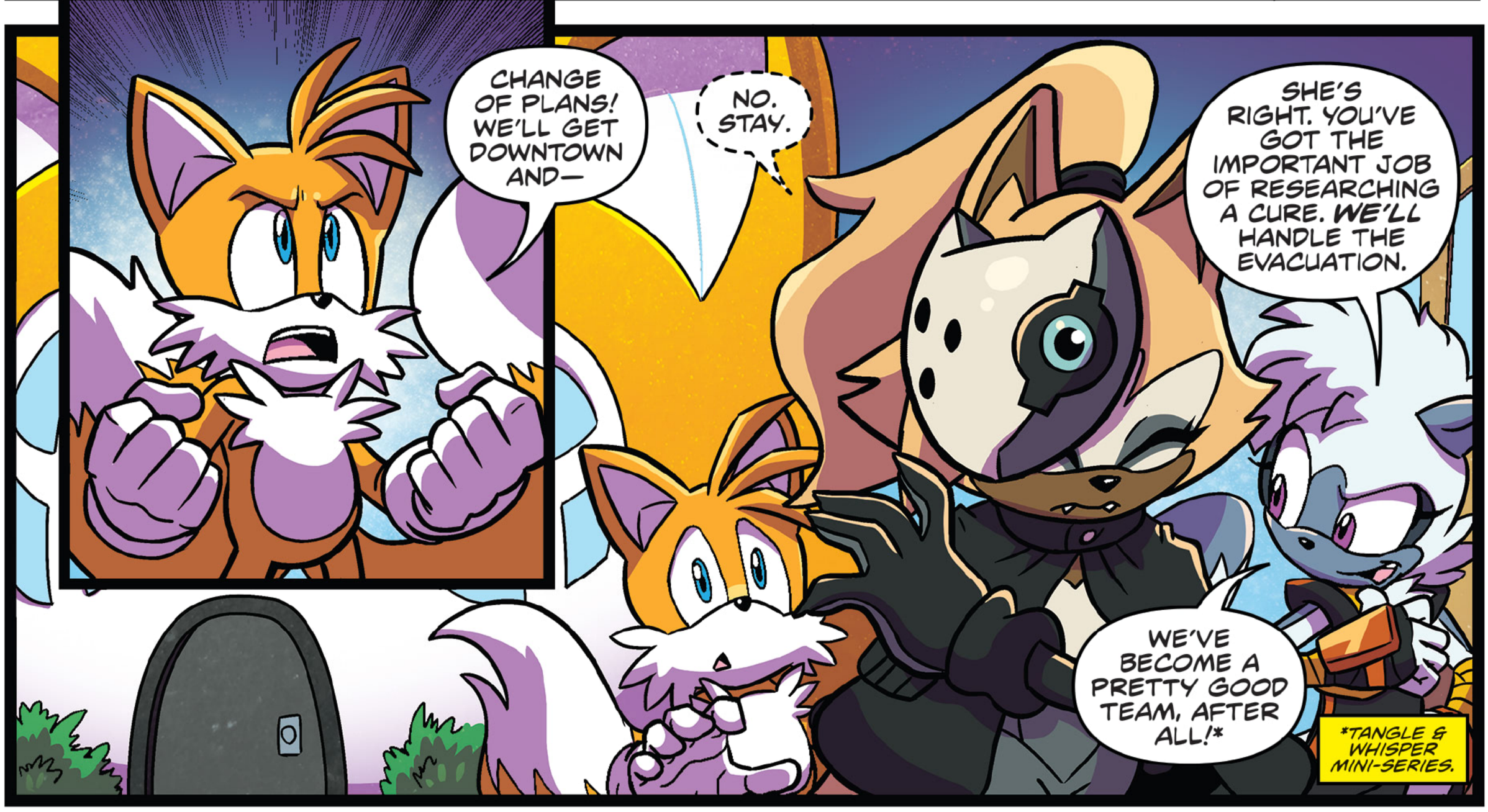
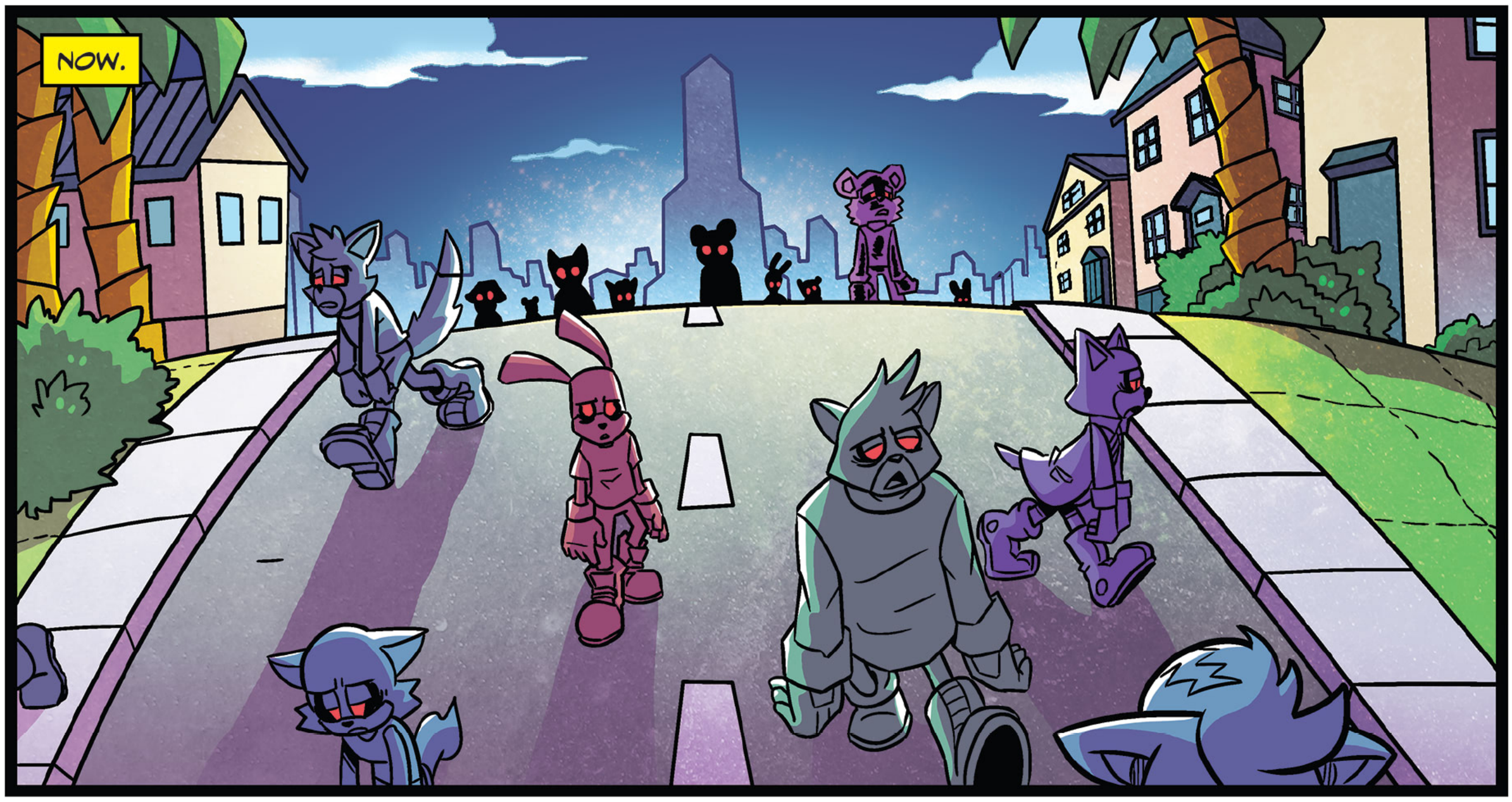


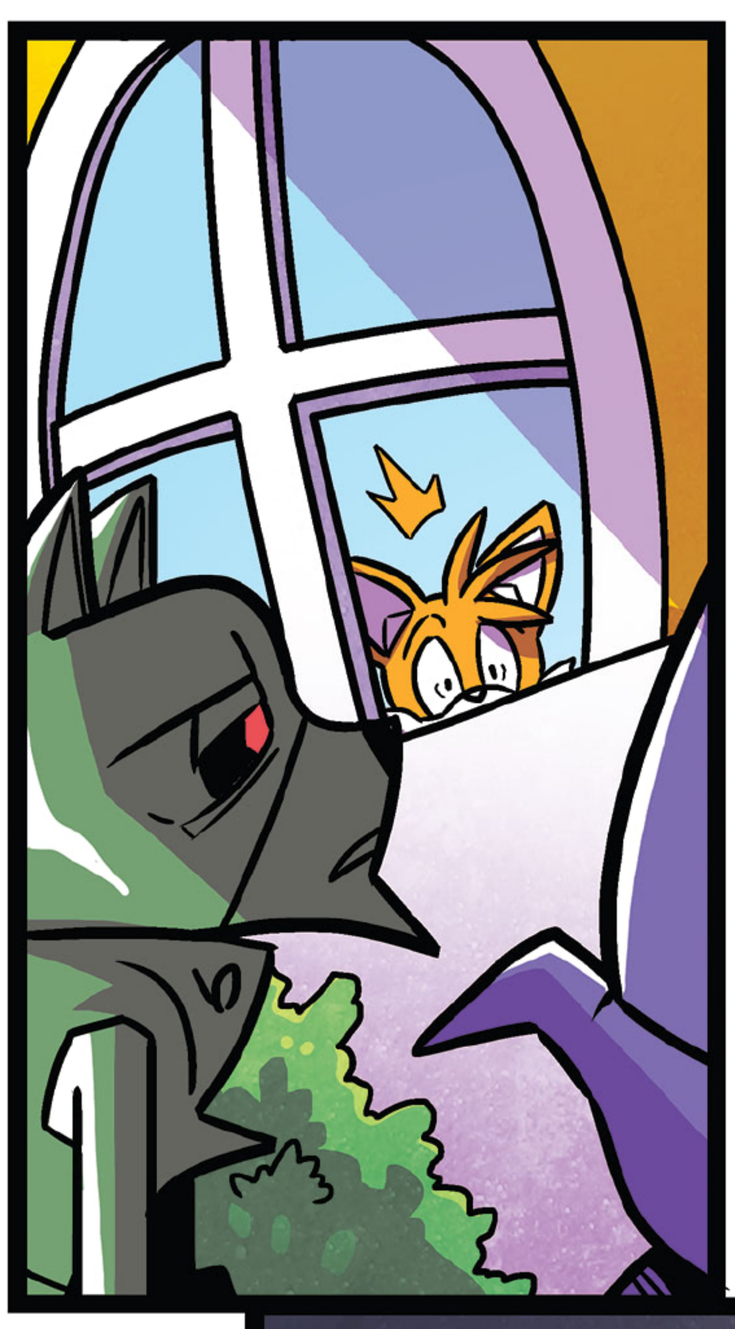
ART BY **JAMAL PEPPERS**

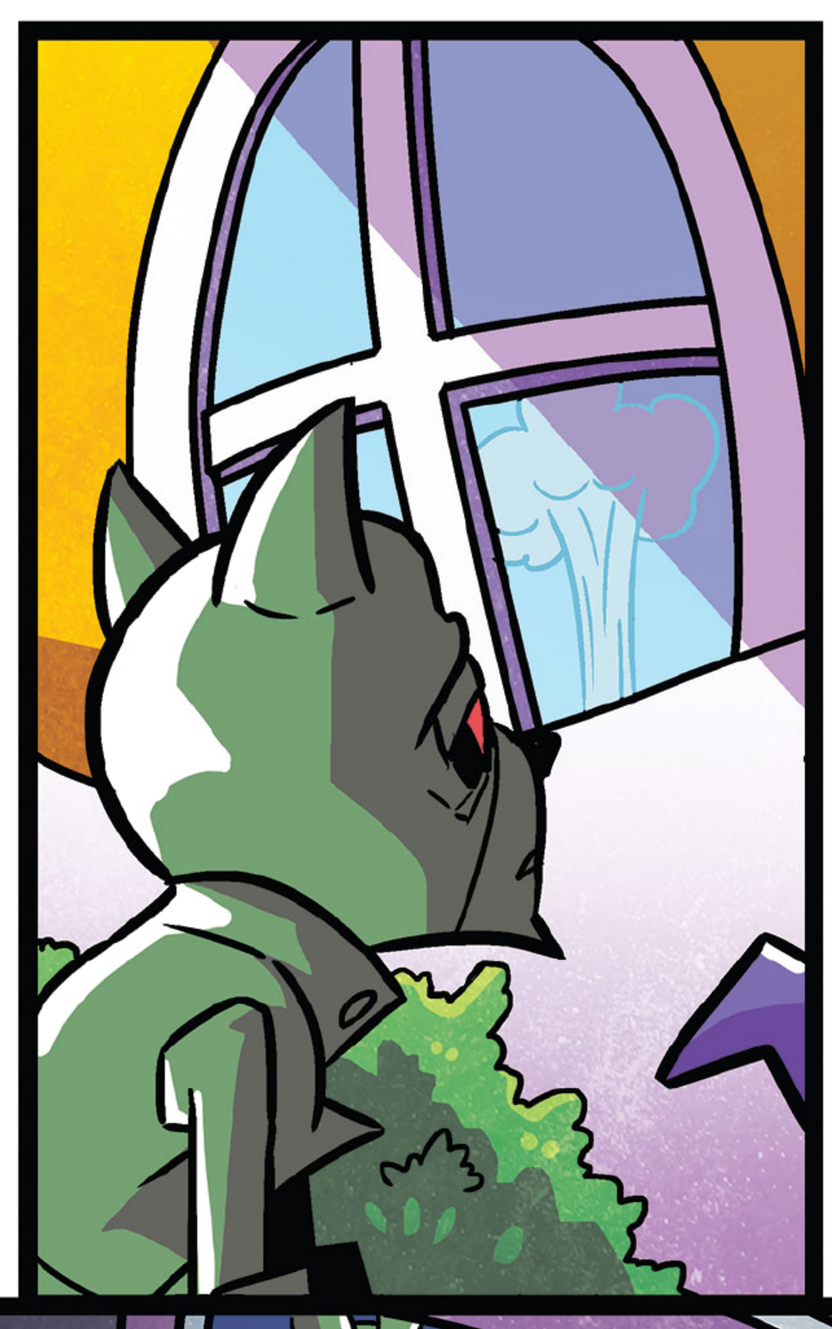

TAILS'S WORKSHOP, CENTRAL CITY.
ONE HOUR AGO.
WHY HERE? WHY NOW?!

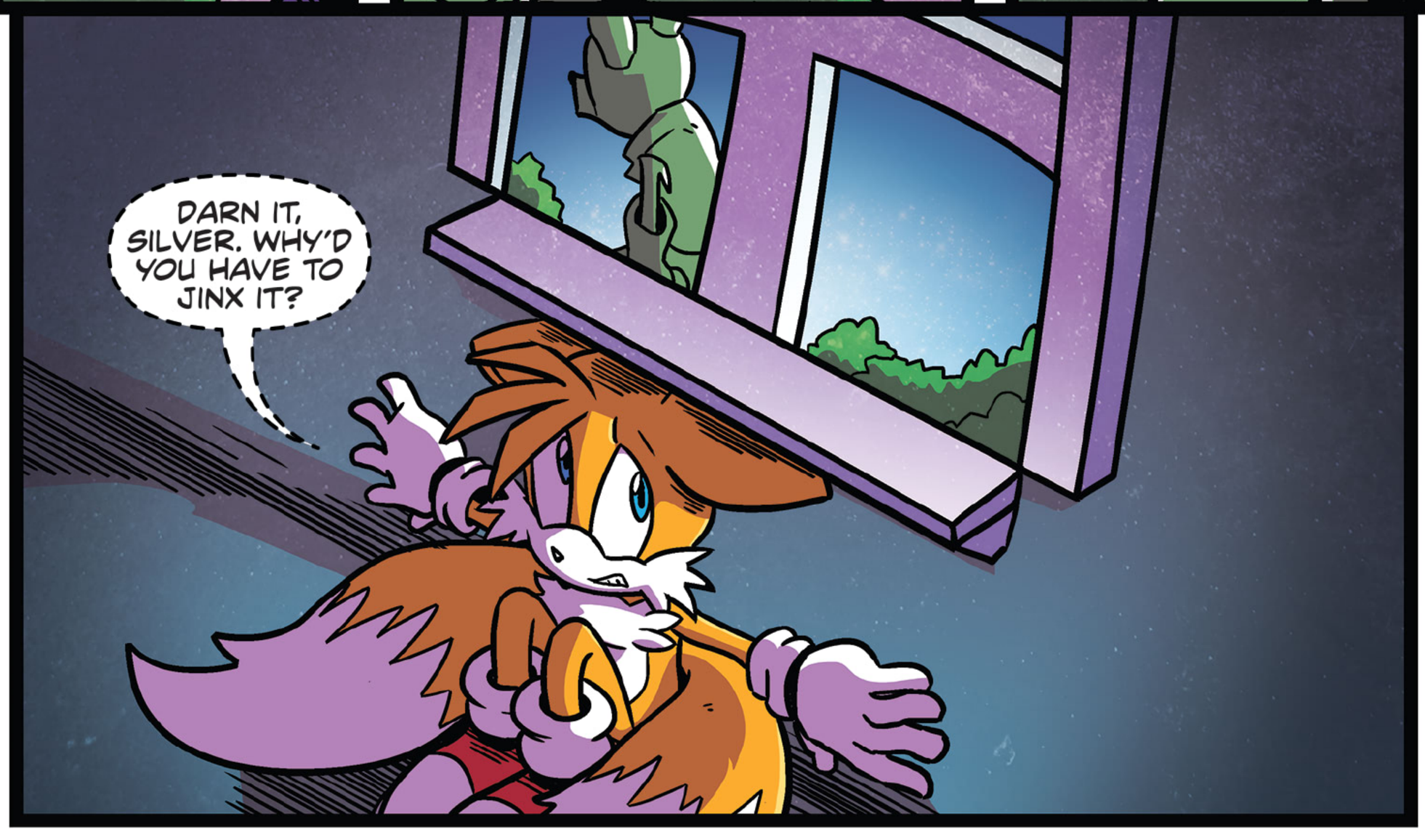

LET'S CURE THAT RUSH HOUR GRIDLOCK WITH DR. EGGMAN'S PATENTED METAL VIRUS!
HA HA HA HA!


CHANGE OF PLANS! WE'LL GET DOWNTOWN AND—
NO. STAY.
SHE'S RIGHT. YOU'VE GOT THE IMPORTANT JOB OF RESEARCHING A CURE. WE'LL HANDLE THE EVACUATION.
WE'VE BECOME A PRETTY GOOD TEAM, AFTER ALL!*
*TANGLE & WHISPER MINI-SERIES.

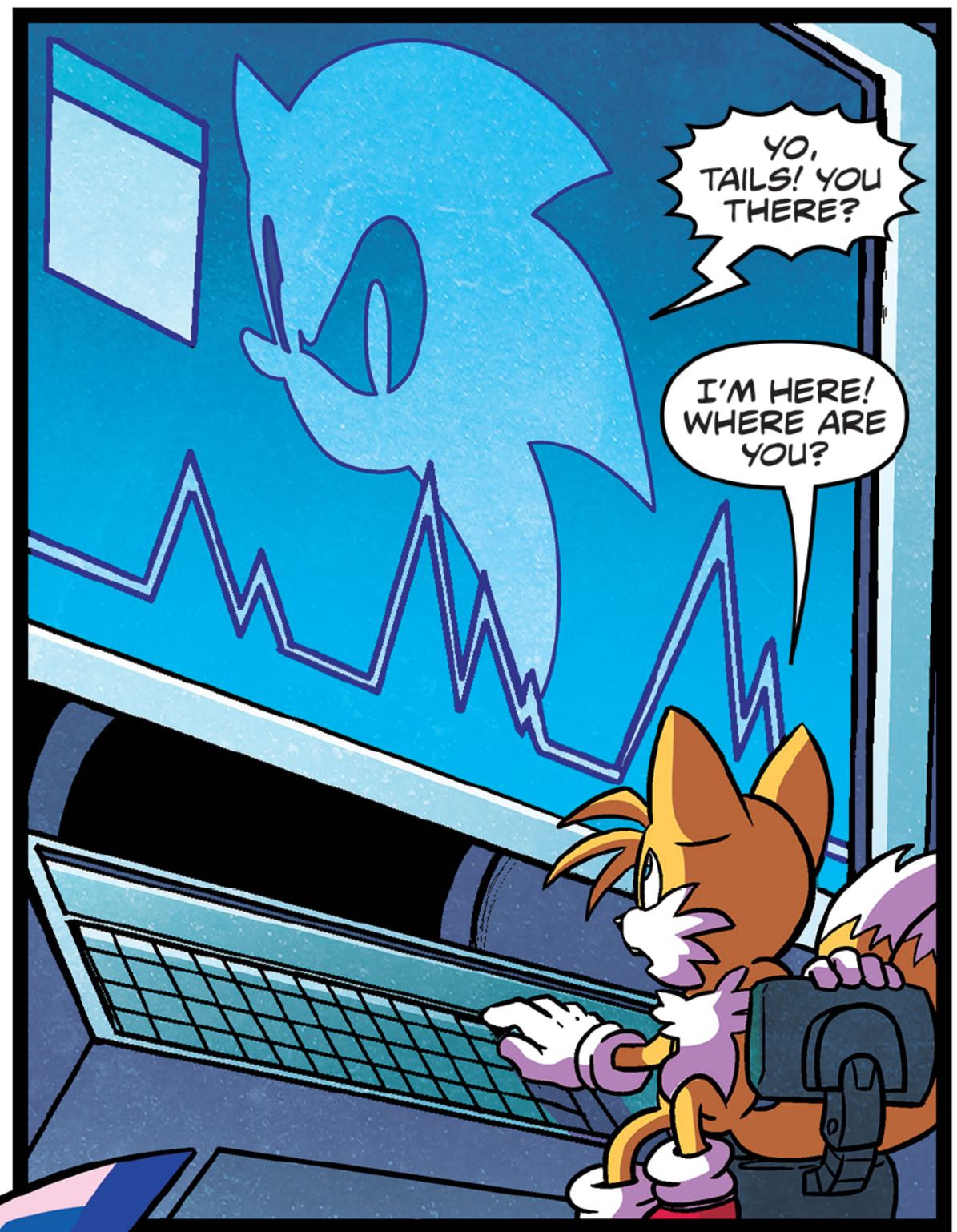

NOW.

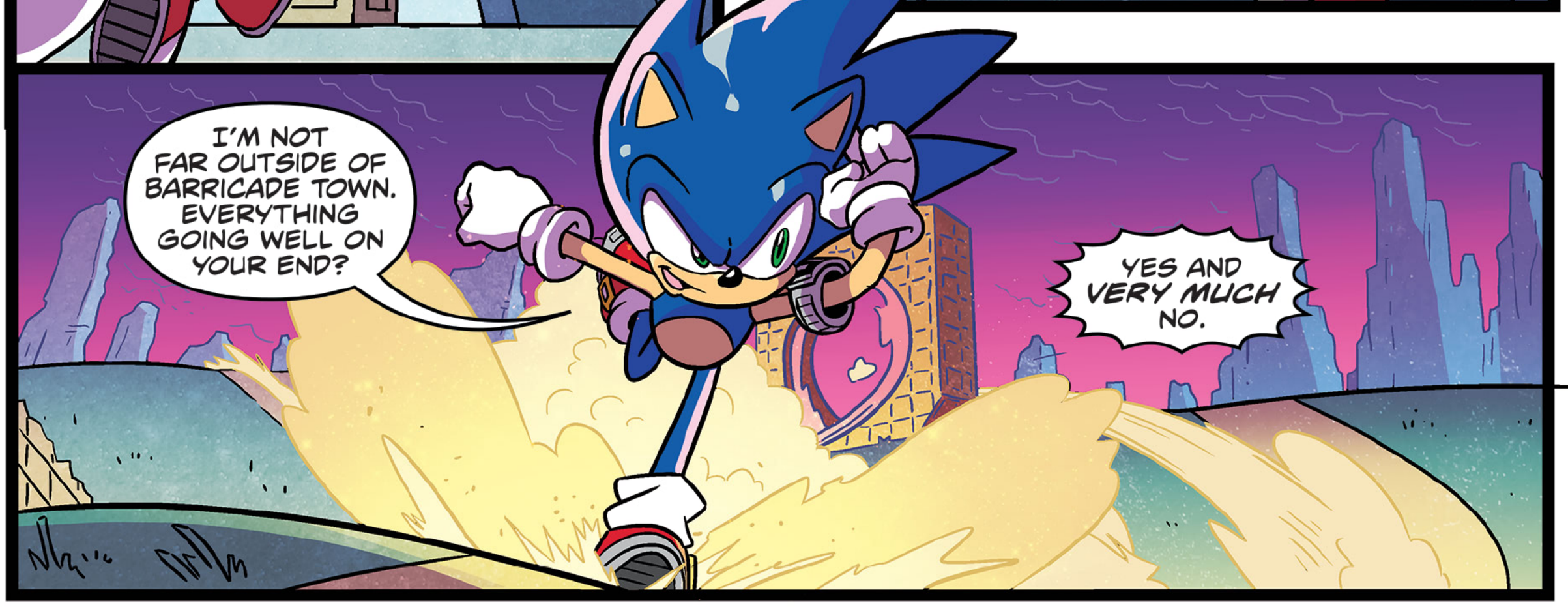


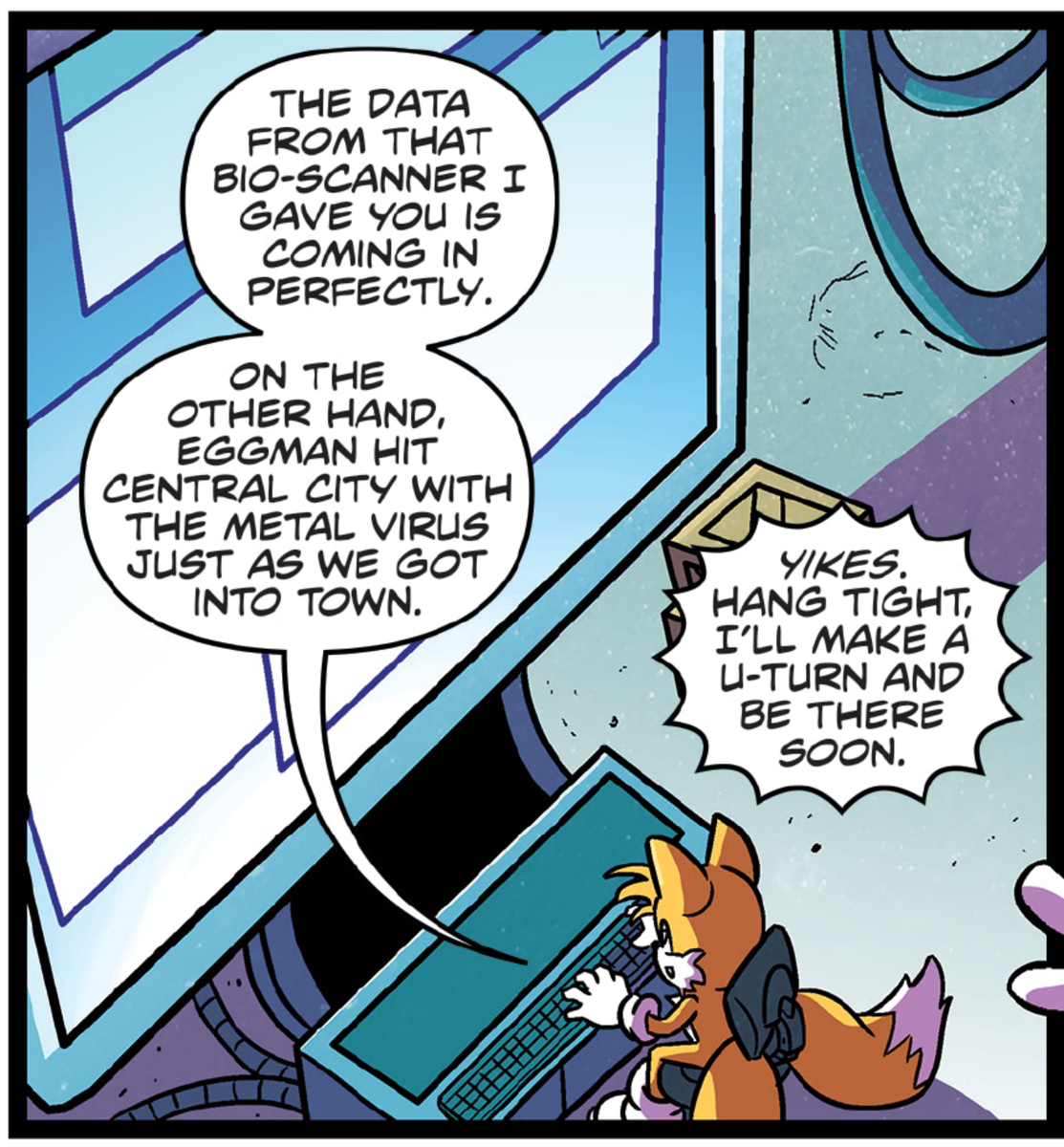



DARN IT, SILVER. WHY'D YOU HAVE TO JINX IT?

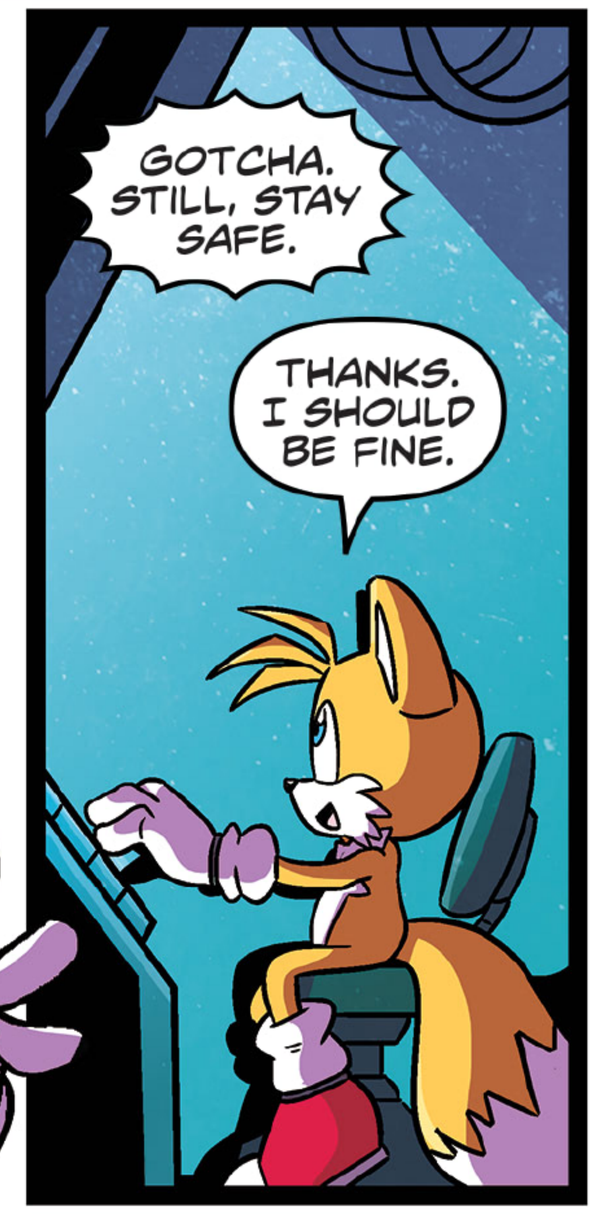
BREEP-BREEP

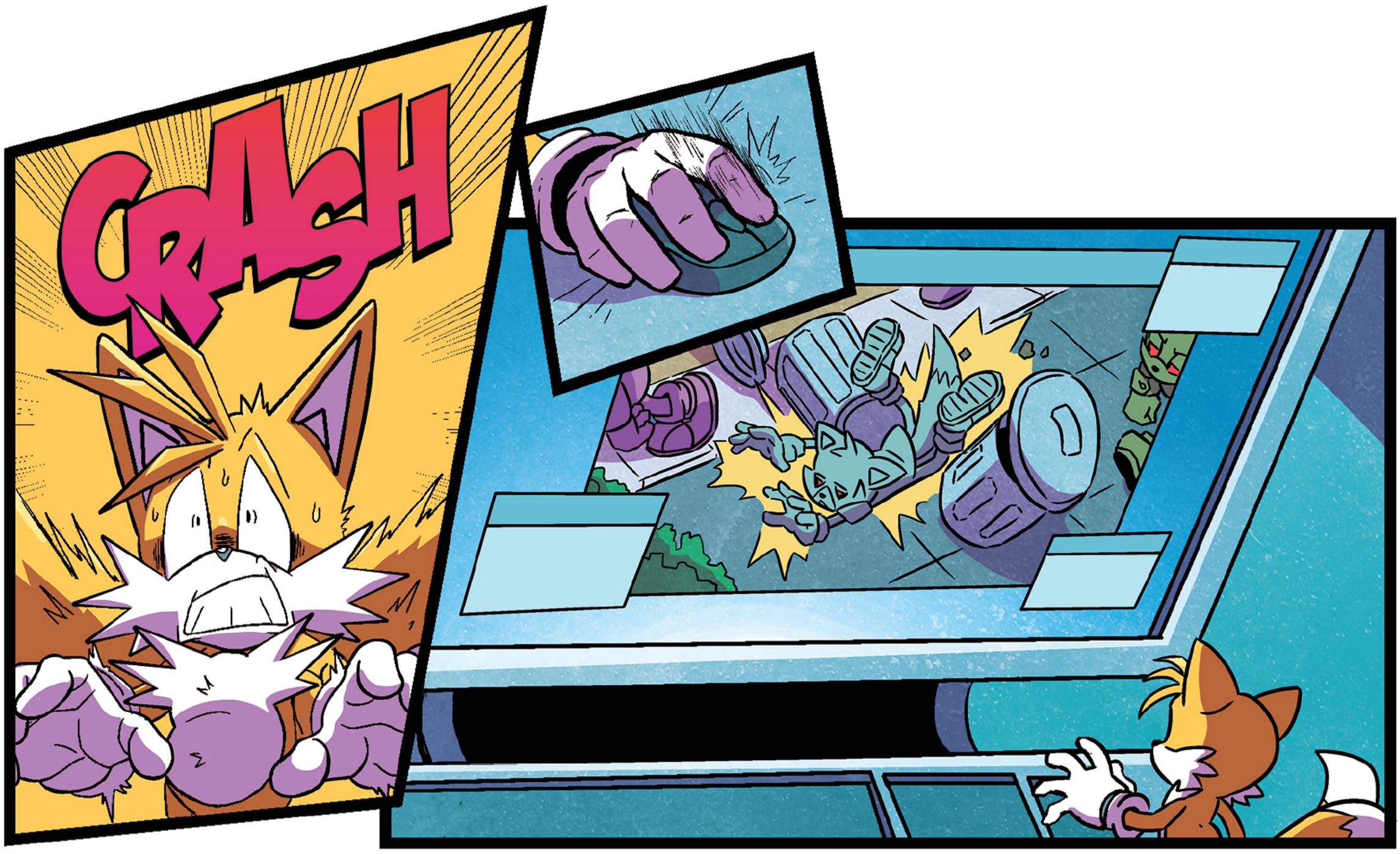

YO, TAILS! YOU THERE?
I'M HERE! WHERE ARE YOU?

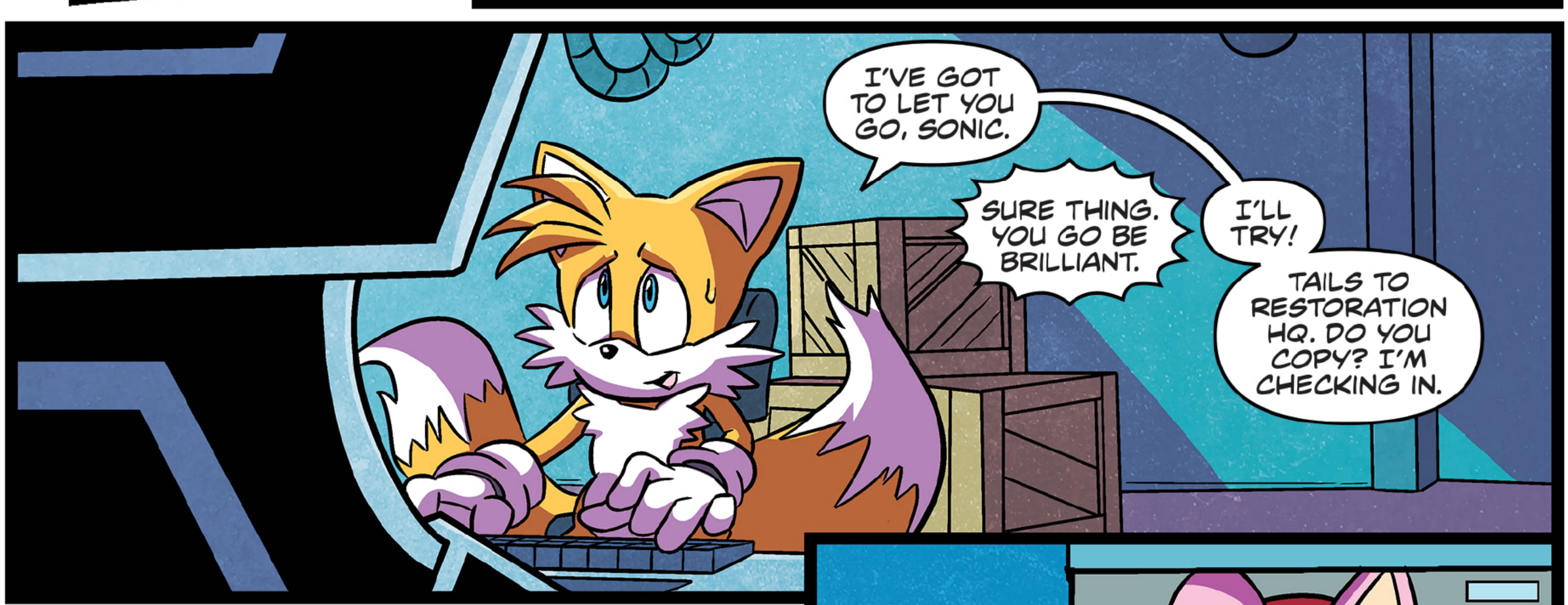

I'M NOT FAR OUTSIDE OF BARRICADE TOWN. EVERYTHING GOING WELL ON YOUR END?
YES AND VERY MUCH NO.

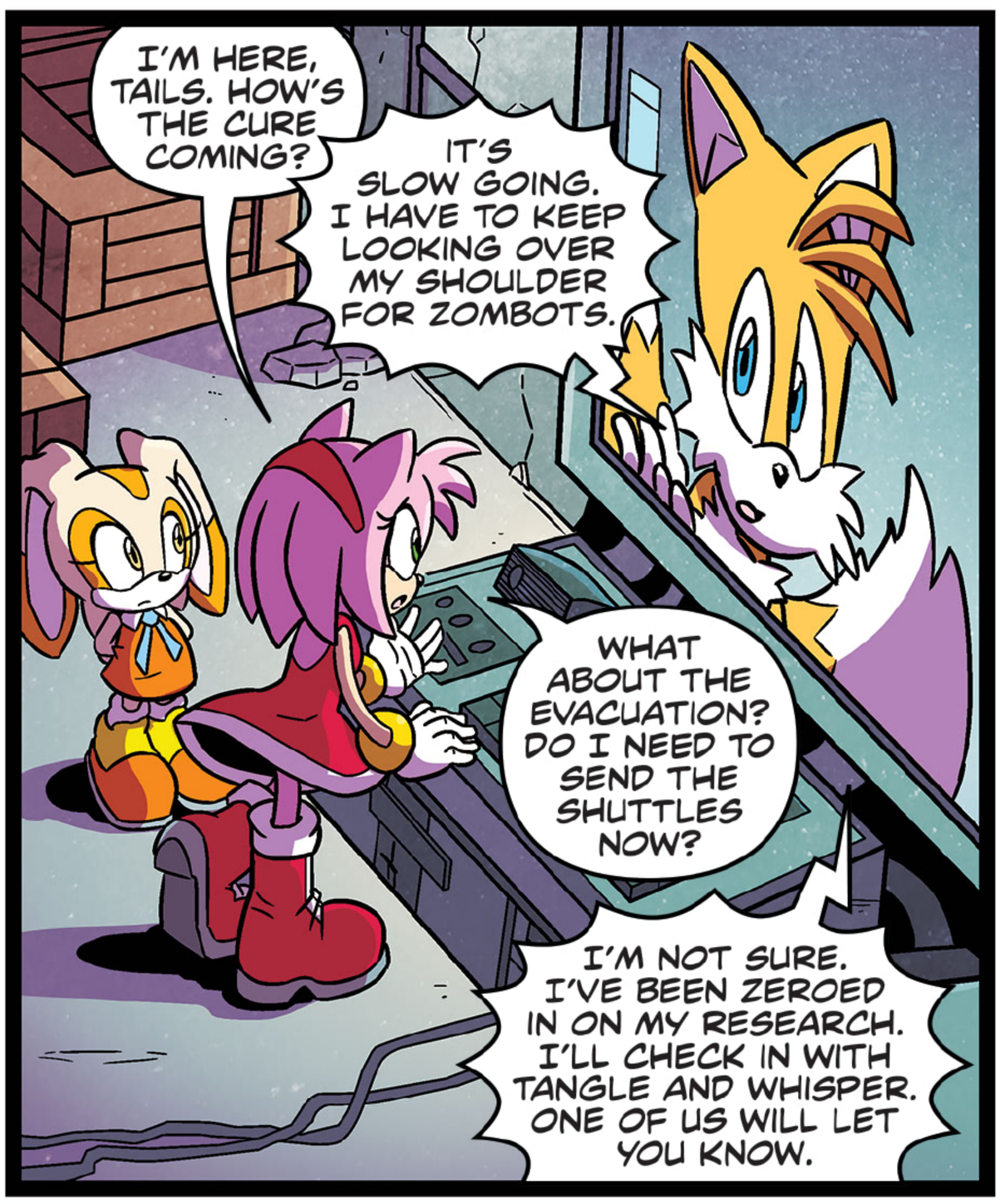

THE DATA FROM THAT BIO-SCANNER I GAVE YOU IS COMING IN PERFECTLY.
ON THE OTHER HAND, EGGMAN HIT CENTRAL CITY WITH THE METAL VIRUS JUST AS WE GOT INTO TOWN.
YIKES. HANG TIGHT, I'LL MAKE A U-TURN AND BE THERE SOON.

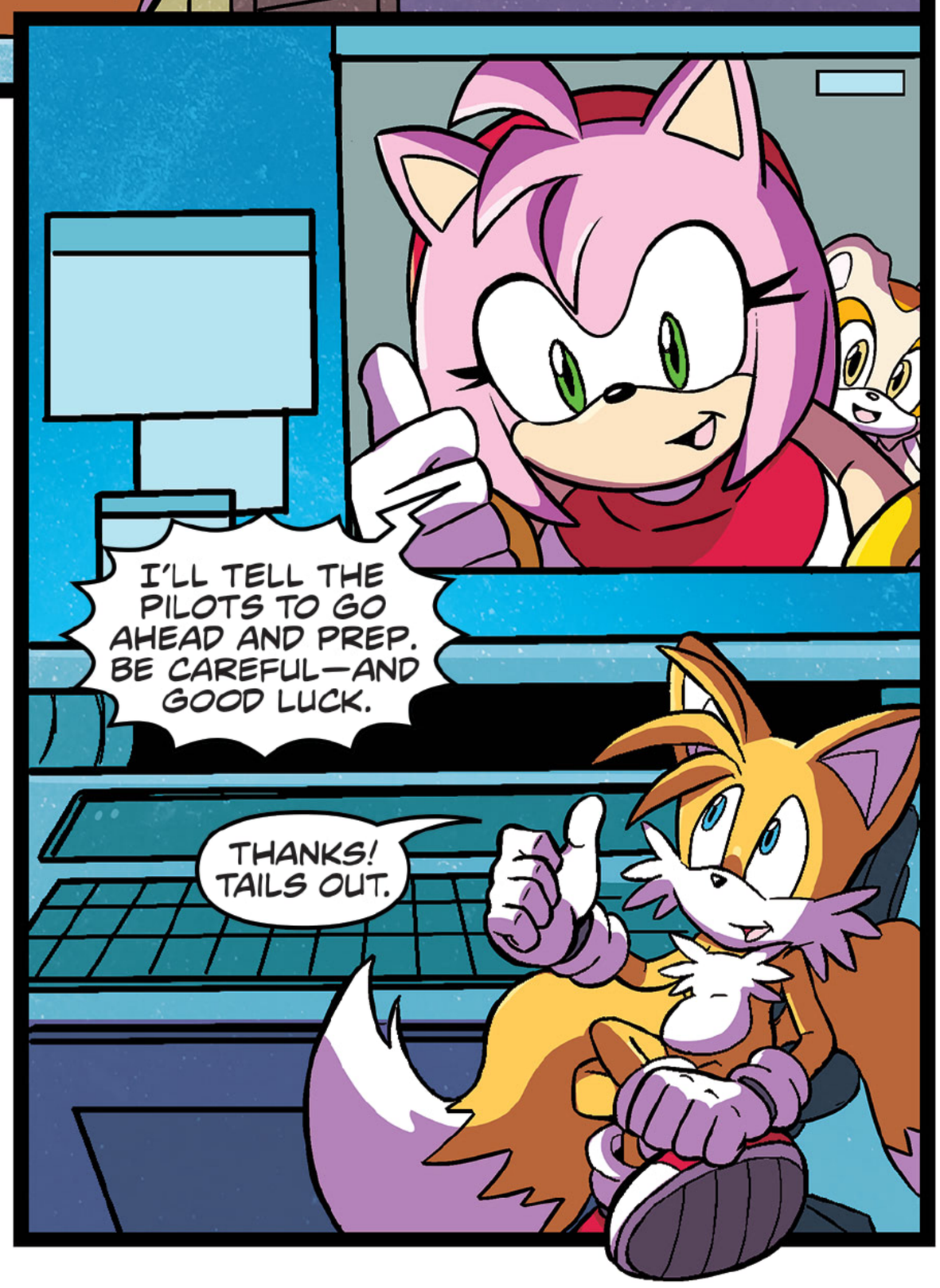
NO-NO-NO! YOU KEEP RUNNING!
WE NEED YOUR SPEED DATA. IT MAY BE THE ONLY KEY TO FINDING A CURE! PLUS, IT'LL BE A BACKUP IN CASE SOMETHING HAPPENS ON MY END.

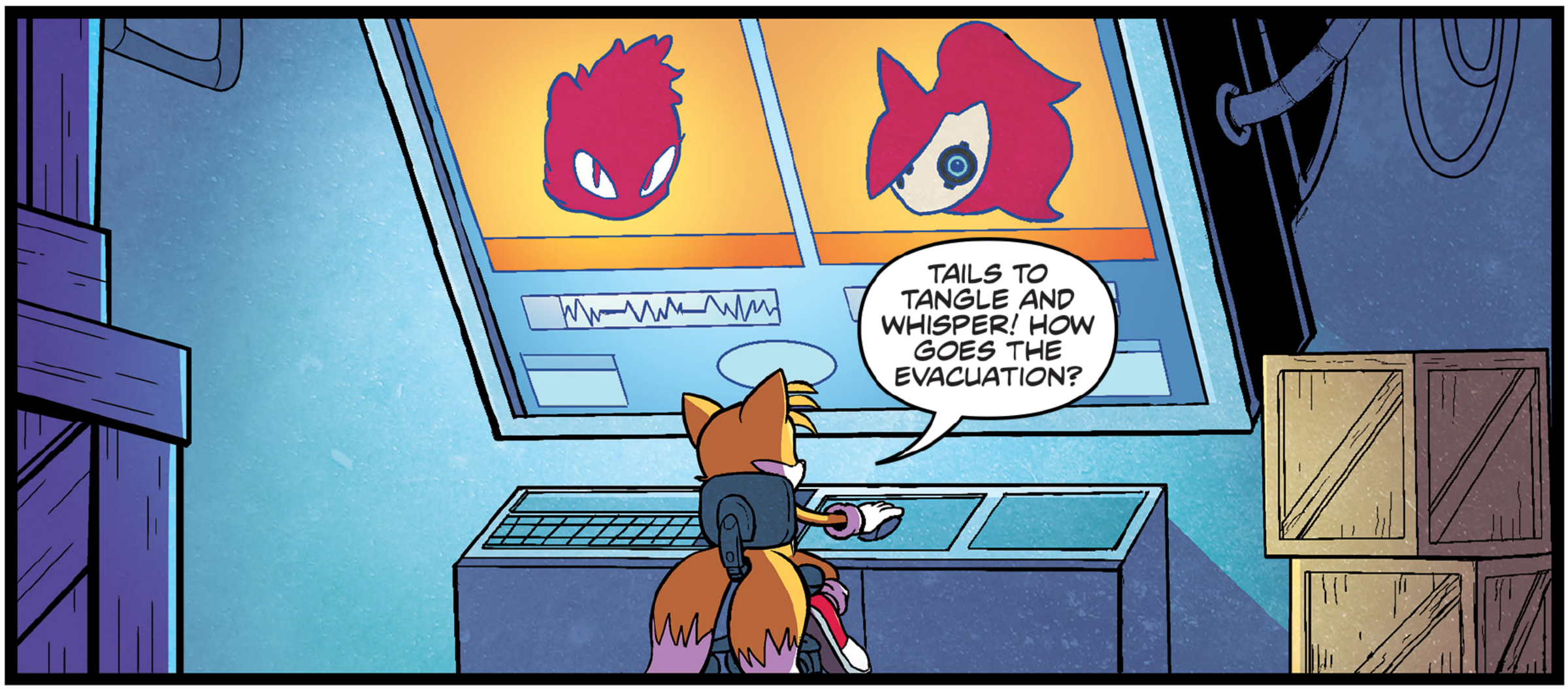

GOTCHA. STILL, STAY SAFE.
THANKS. I SHOULD BE FINE.

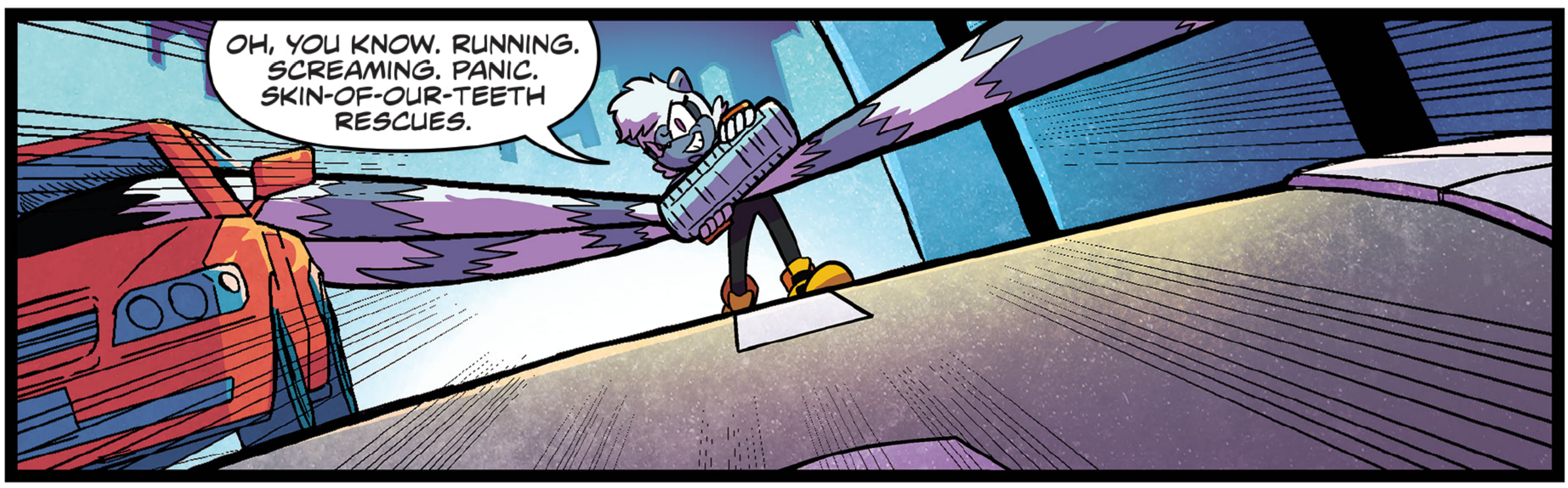

CRASH


I'VE GOT TO LET YOU GO, SONIC.
SURE THING. YOU GO BE BRILLIANT.
I'LL TRY!
TAILS TO RESTORATION HQ. DO YOU COPY? I'M CHECKING IN.

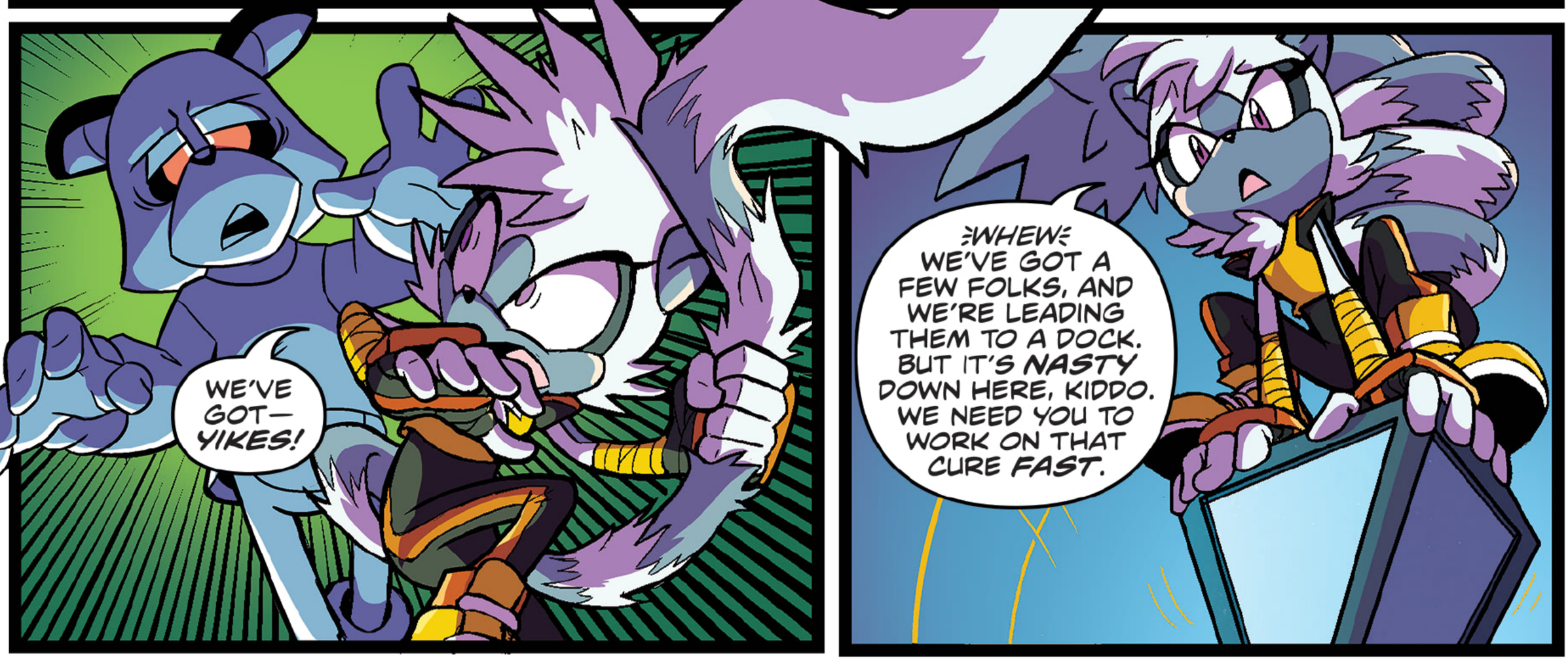

I'M HERE, TAILS. HOW'S THE CURE COMING?
IT'S SLOW GOING. I HAVE TO KEEP LOOKING OVER MY SHOULDER FOR ZOMBOTS.
WHAT ABOUT THE EVACUATION? DO I NEED TO SEND THE SHUTTLES NOW?
I'M NOT SURE. I'VE BEEN ZEROED IN ON MY RESEARCH. I'LL CHECK IN WITH TANGLE AND WHISPER. ONE OF US WILL LET YOU KNOW.

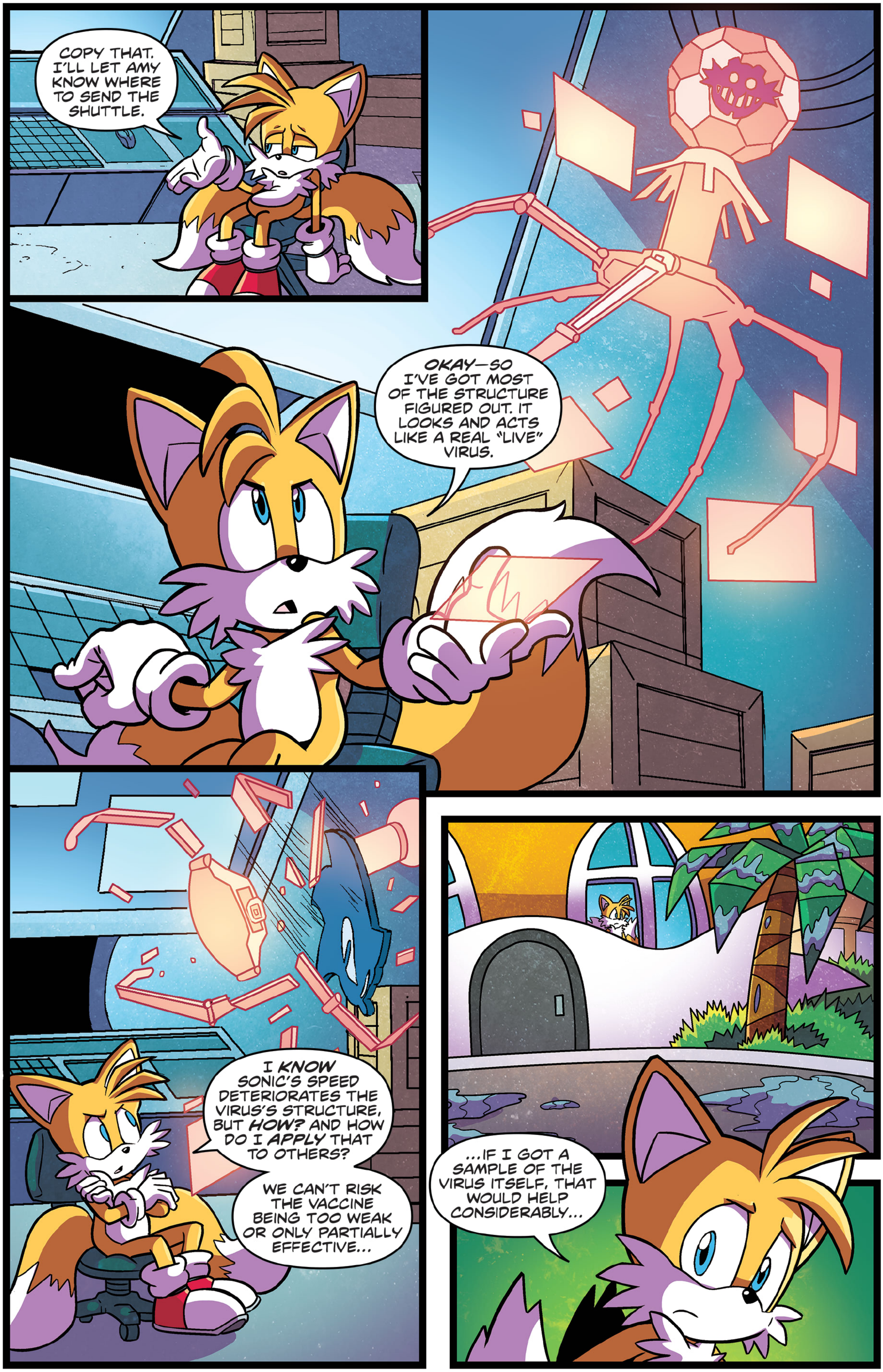

I'LL TELL THE PILOTS TO GO AHEAD AND PREP. BE CAREFUL—AND GOOD LUCK.
THANKS! TAILS OUT.

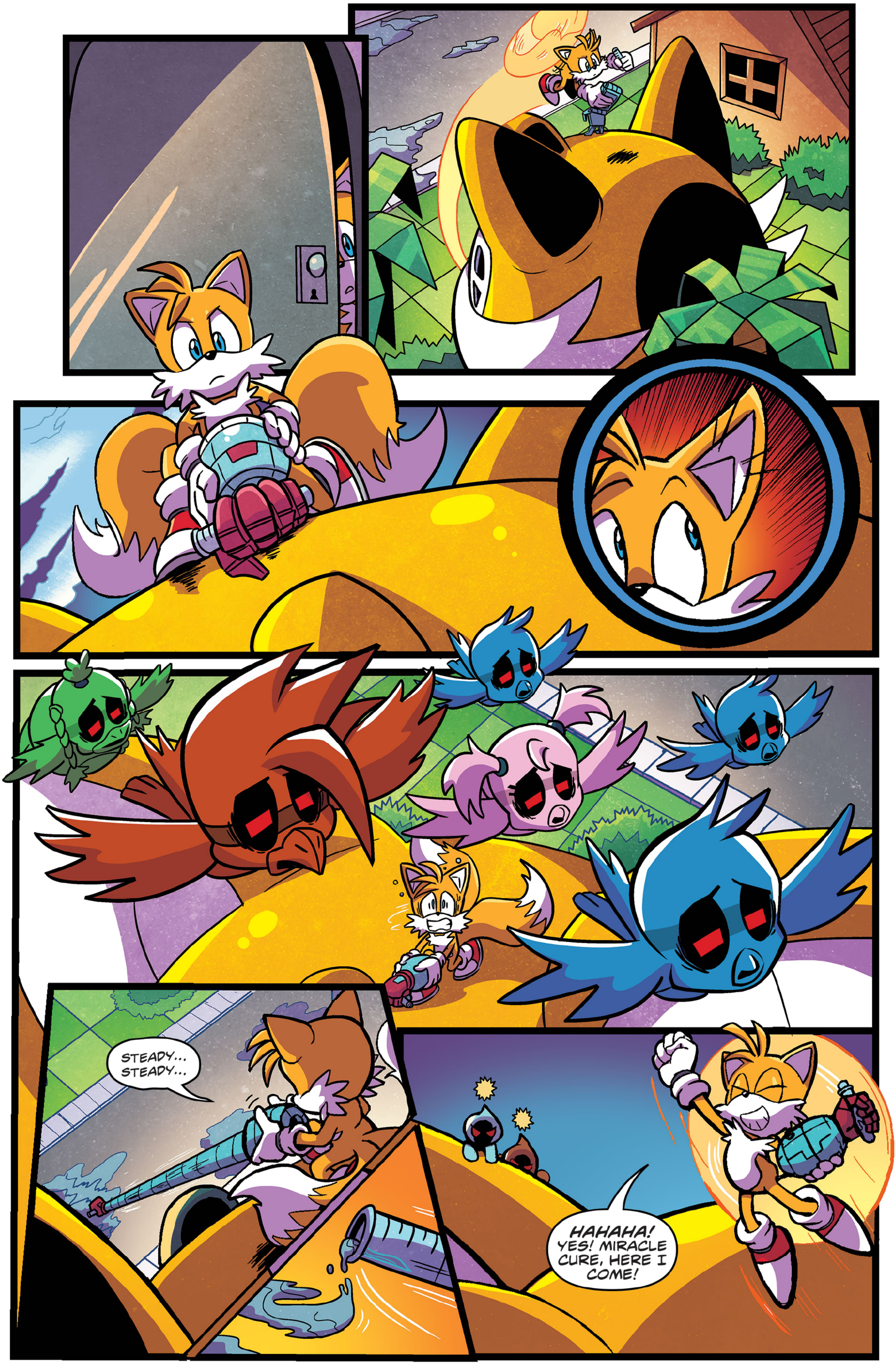

TAILS TO TANGLE AND WHISPER! HOW GOES THE EVACUATION?

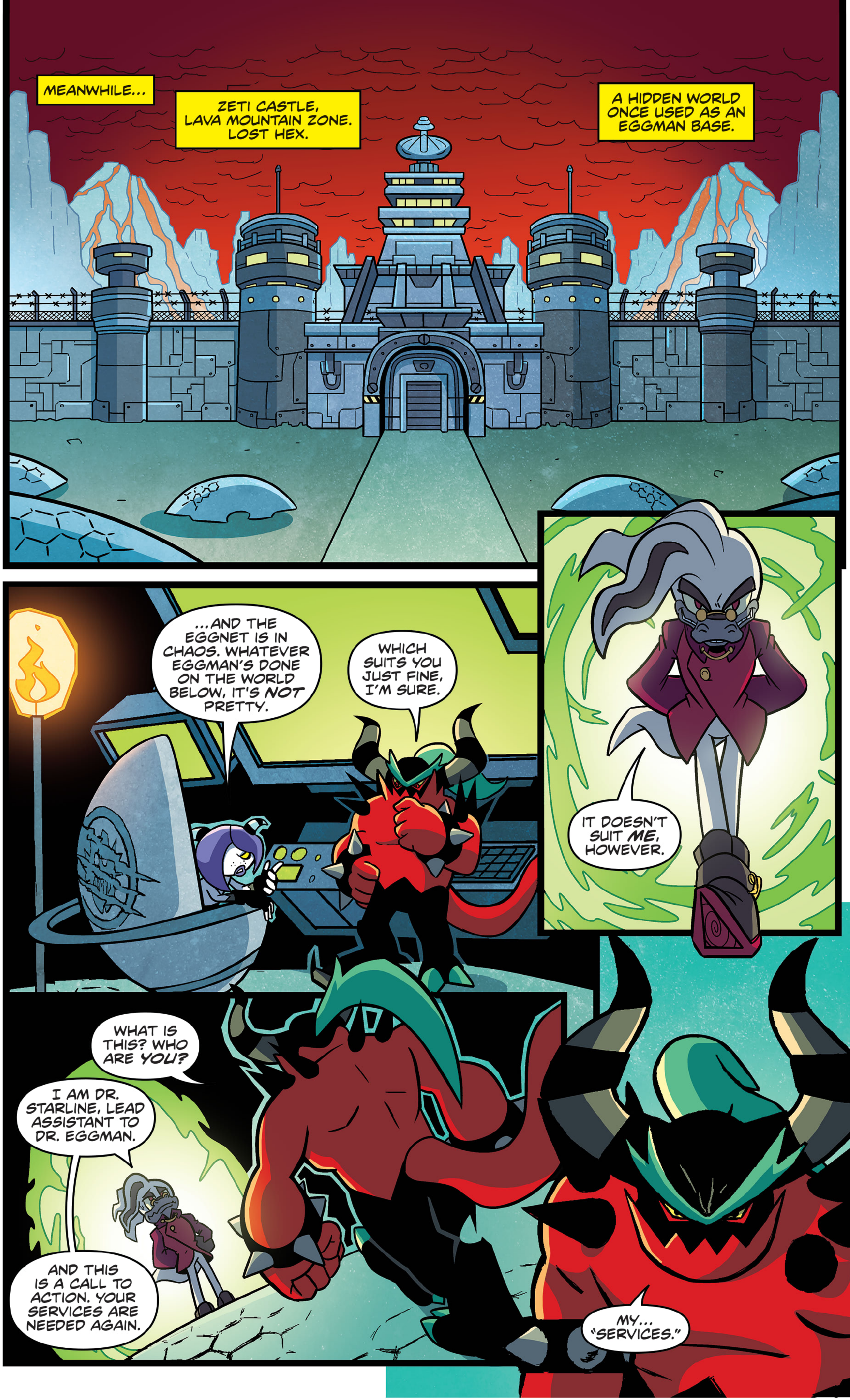

OH, YOU KNOW. RUNNING. SCREAMING. PANIC. SKIN-OF-OUR-TEETH RESCUES.

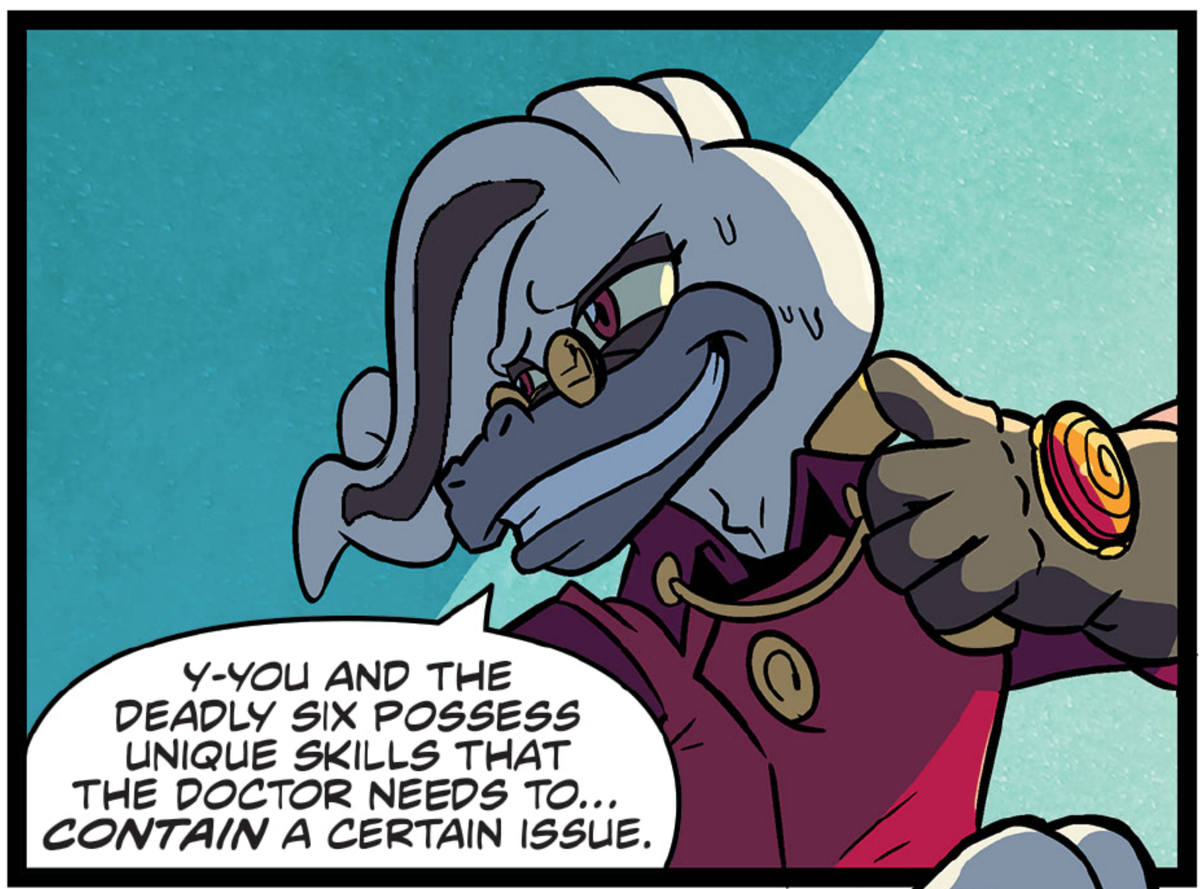
IT WOULD BE SO COOL IF IT WASN'T SO—Y'KNOW—HORRIBLE AND AWFUL.
TWANG

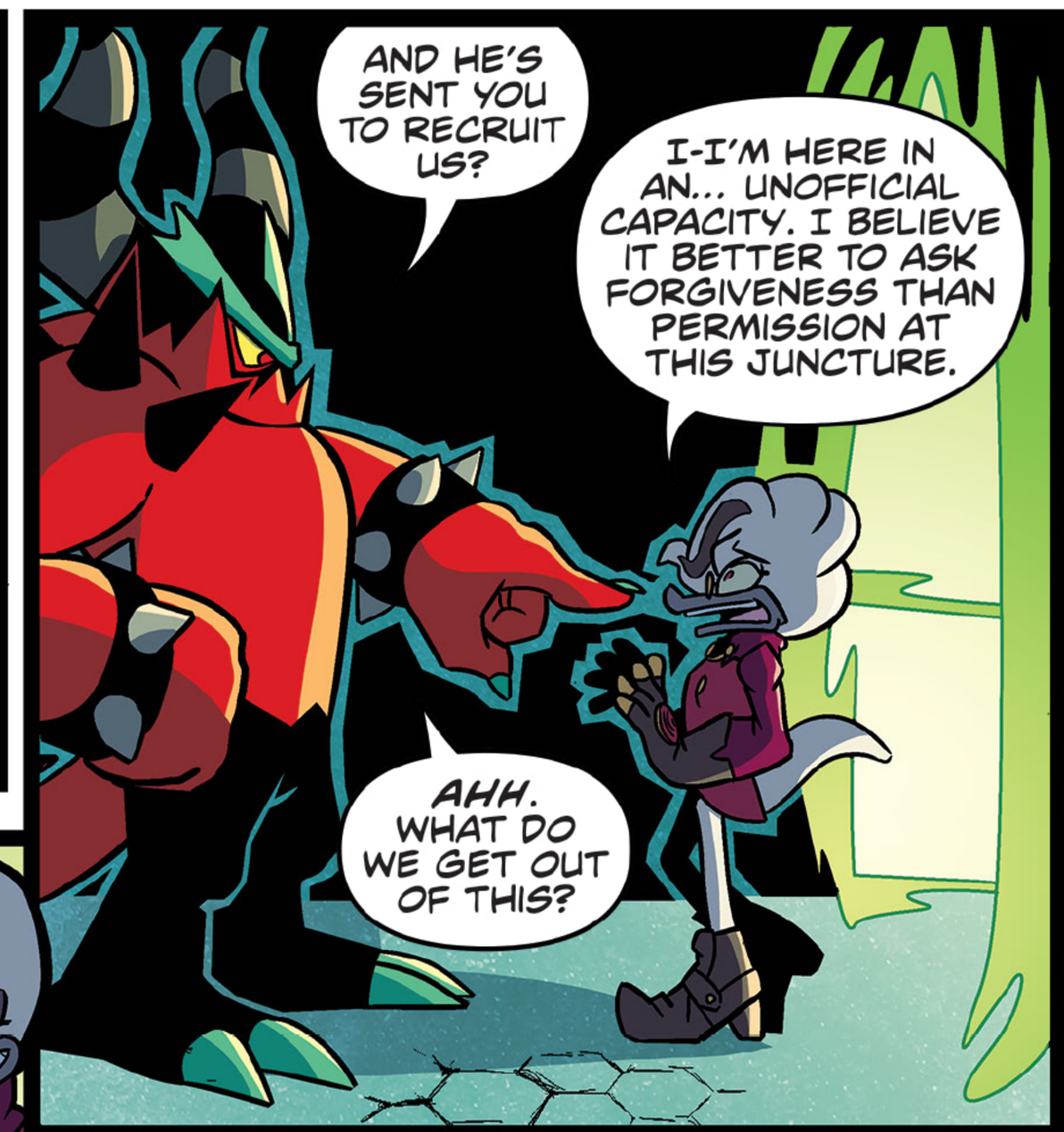

WE'VE GOT— YIKES!
WHEW WE'VE GOT A FEW FOLKS, AND WE'RE LEADING THEM TO A DOCK. BUT IT'S NASTY DOWN HERE, KIDDO. WE NEED YOU TO WORK ON THAT CURE FAST.


COPY THAT. I'LL LET AMY KNOW WHERE TO SEND THE SHUTTLE.
OKAY—SO I'VE GOT MOST OF THE STRUCTURE FIGURED OUT. IT LOOKS AND ACTS LIKE A REAL "LIVE" VIRUS.
I KNOW SONIC'S SPEED DETERIORATES THE VIRUS'S STRUCTURE, BUT HOW? AND HOW DO I APPLY THAT TO OTHERS?
WE CAN'T RISK THE VACCINE BEING TOO WEAK OR ONLY PARTIALLY EFFECTIVE...
...IF I GOT A SAMPLE OF THE VIRUS ITSELF, THAT WOULD HELP CONSIDERABLY...


STEADY... STEADY...
HAHAHA! YES! MIRACLE CURE, HERE I COME!


MEANWHILE...
ZETI CASTLE, LAVA MOUNTAIN ZONE. LOST HEX.
A HIDDEN WORLD ONCE USED AS AN EGGMAN BASE.
...AND THE EGGNET IS IN CHAOS. WHATEVER EGGMAN'S DONE ON THE WORLD BELOW, IT'S NOT PRETTY.
WHICH SUITS YOU JUST FINE, I'M SURE.
IT DOESN'T SUIT ME, HOWEVER.
WHAT IS THIS? WHO ARE YOU?
I AM DR. STARLINE, LEAD ASSISTANT TO DR. EGGMAN.
AND THIS IS A CALL TO ACTION. YOUR SERVICES ARE NEEDED AGAIN.
MY... "SERVICES."


Y-YOU AND THE DEADLY SIX POSSESS UNIQUE SKILLS THAT THE DOCTOR NEEDS TO... CONTAIN A CERTAIN ISSUE.


AND HE'S SENT YOU TO RECRUIT US?
I-I'M HERE IN AN... UNOFFICIAL CAPACITY. I BELIEVE IT BETTER TO ASK FORGIVENESS THAN PERMISSION AT THIS JUNCTURE.
AHH. WHAT DO WE GET OUT OF THIS?

AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE AMENDS WITH EGGMAN, COMMAND INCREDIBLE POWER, AND DESTROY SONIC THE HEDGEHOG.

HMM... HOW CAN I REFUSE SUCH AN OFFER?
ALLOW ME SOME TIME TO RALLY MY FORCES, AND WE ARE YOURS.

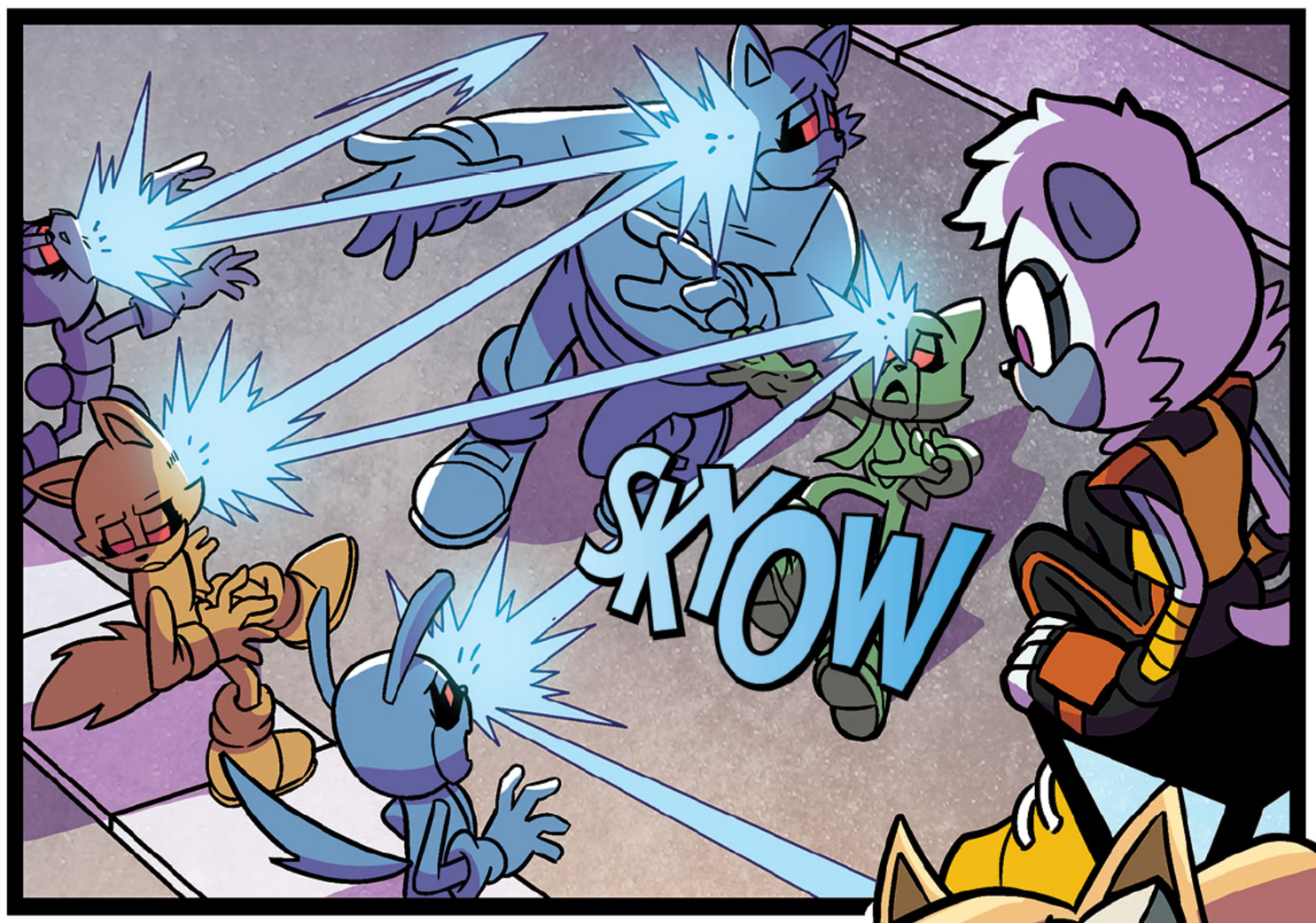
BOY, DID HE MAKE A MISTAKE.
AND WE SHALL CAPITALIZE ON IT. GATHER THE OTHERS.

EXCELLENT! I HAVE MY OWN BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO, BUT I WILL REACH OUT TO YOU SOON.

WEE-HEE-HEE! THAT'S IT! LOOK AT ME! I'M THE MOST INTERESTING PERSON OUT HERE!

WHOA!

OKAY! FAIR ENOUGH! UMM... TIME-OUT?


SKYOW

THAT WAS AWESOME!

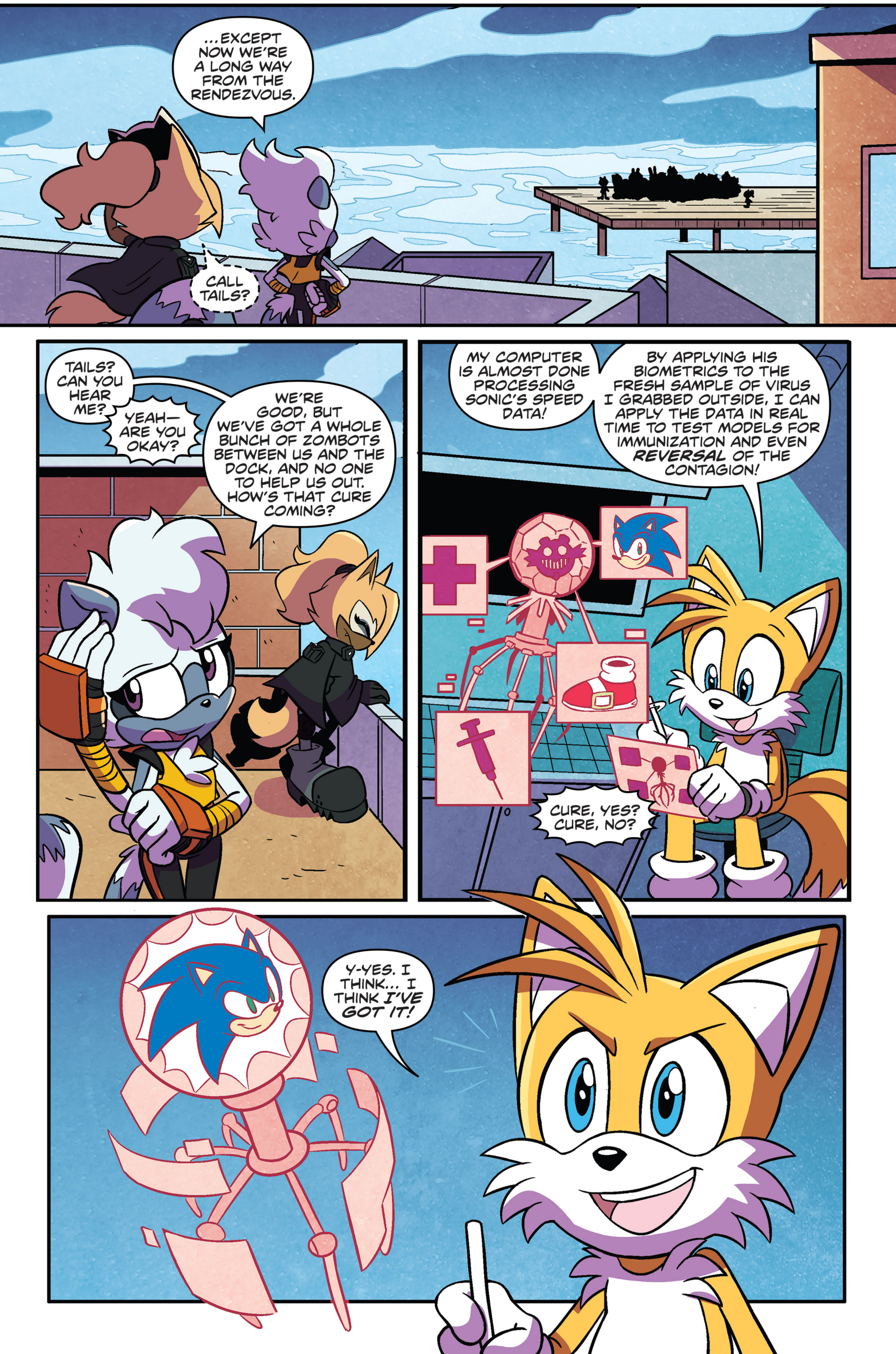
THANKS.
MOVE.

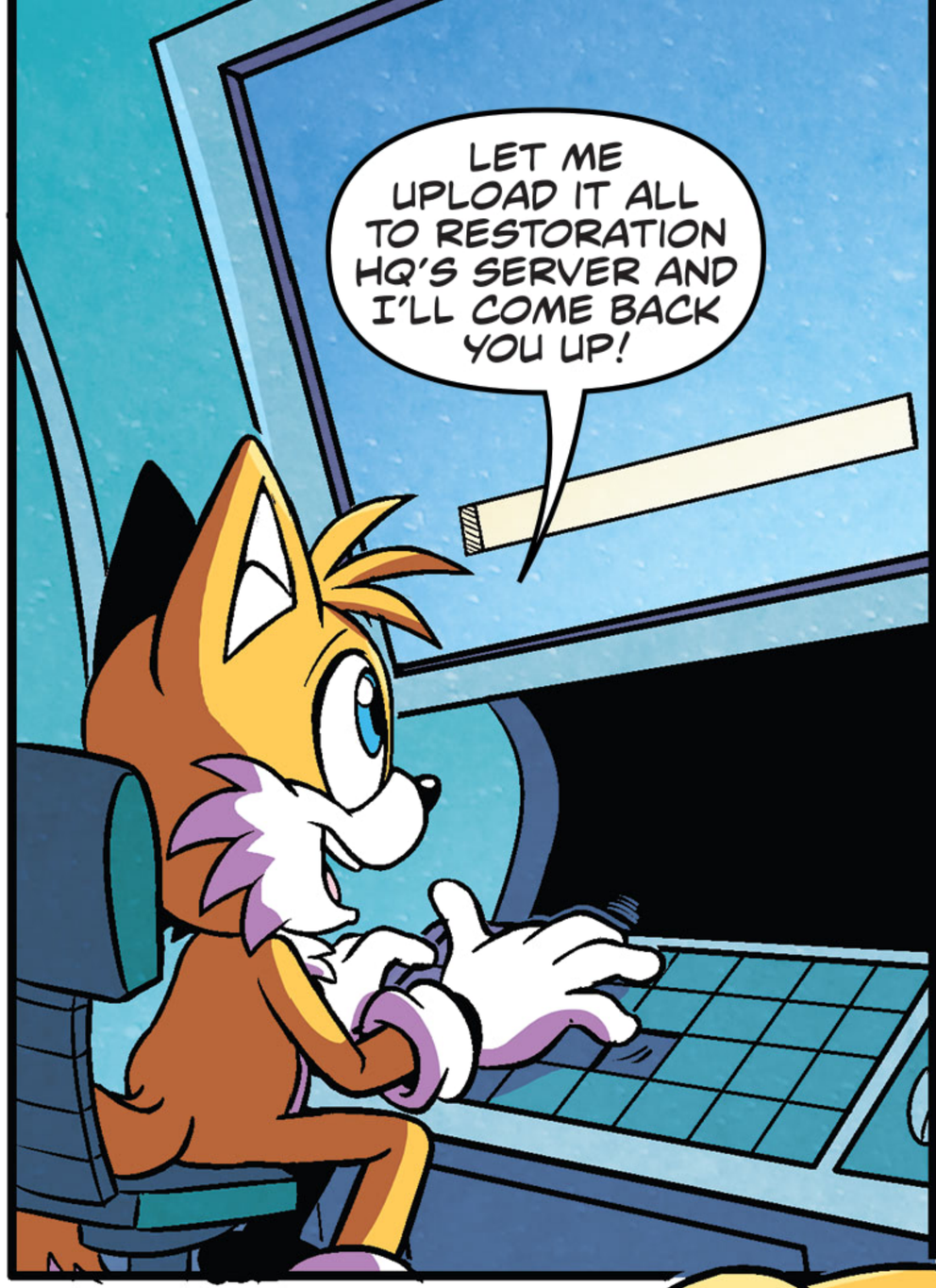
OKAY! NOW WHAT?
HELP?
GOOD IDEA!
AMY! IT'S TANGLE! WHAT'S THE E.T.A. ON SOME BACK-UP?
AMY? CREAM? VECTOR? ANYBODY?
FWEEE
THAT'S... OMINOUS. UM... SILVER? DO YOU COPY? CAN YOU LEND US A HAND?
ICE PARADISE IS ON FIRE! I'VE GOT MY HANDS FULL!

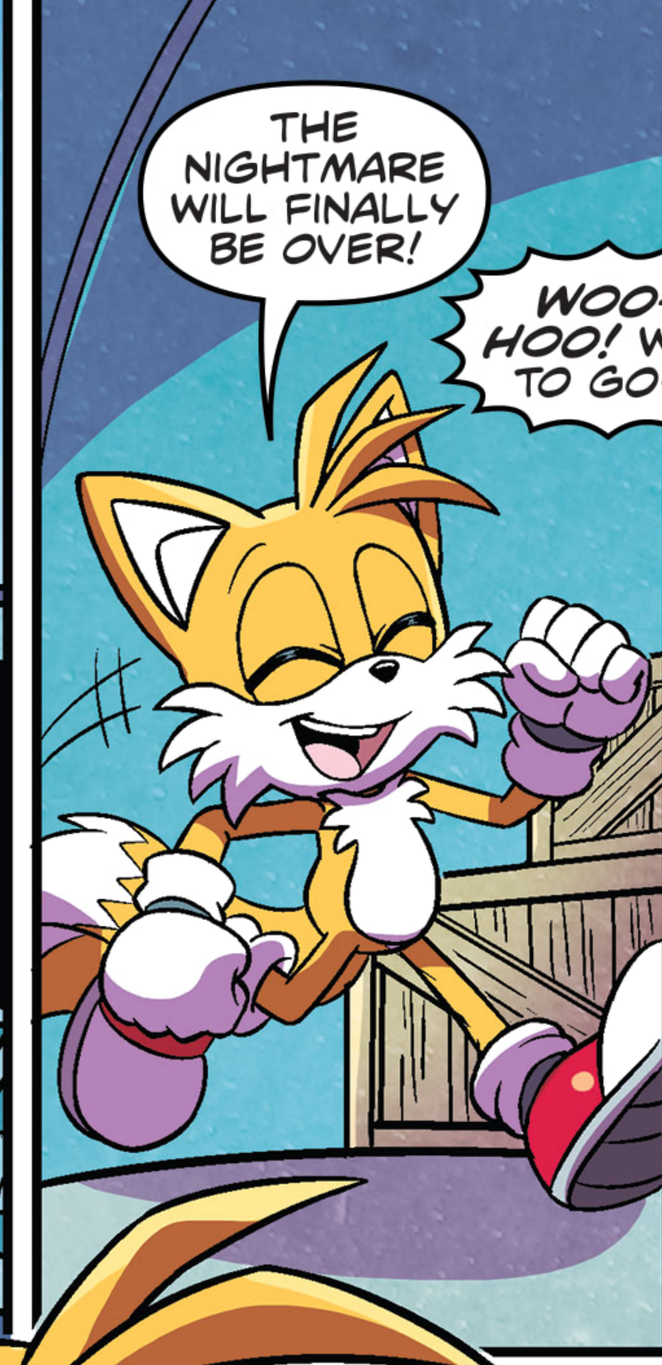
KINDA LATE TO ASK, BUT IS IT OKAY TO BE SHOOTING YOUR LITTLE WISP BUDDIES AT THE ZOMBOTS?
THEY'RE PURE ENERGY WHEN FIRED.

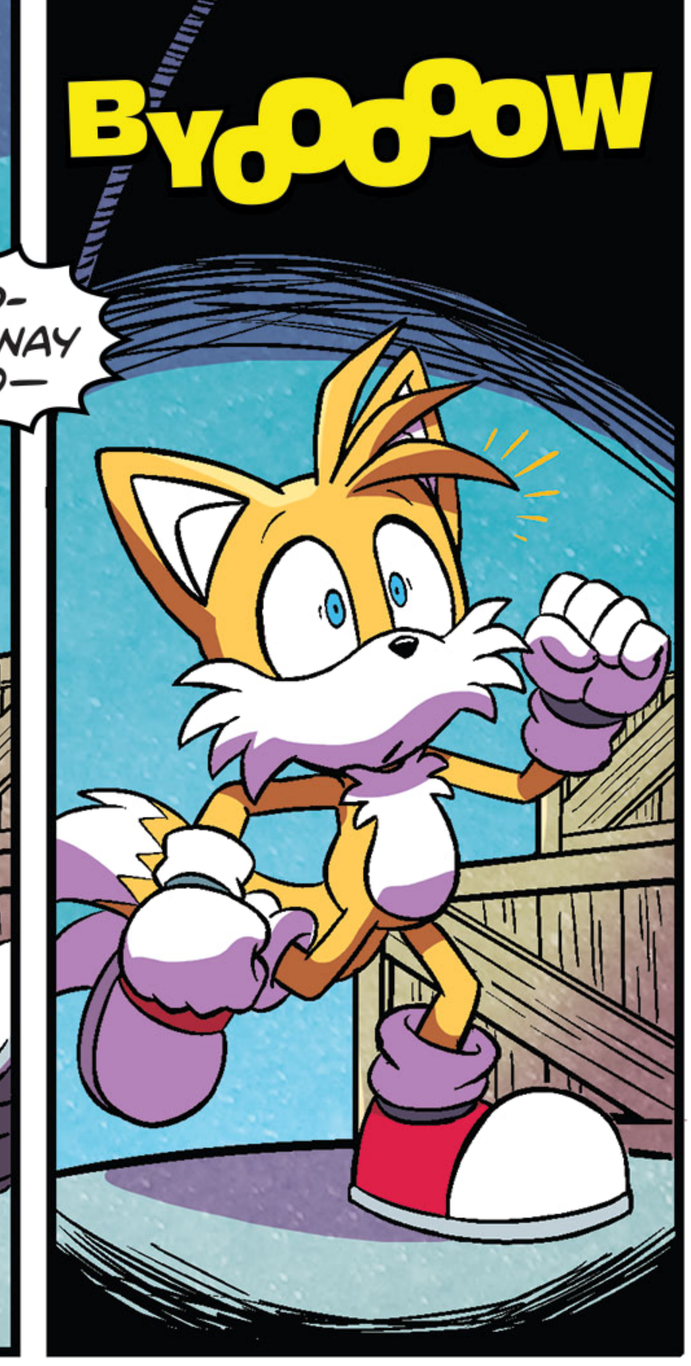
OH, COOL! LAST THING WE NEED IS ZOMBOT WISPS— EEK!

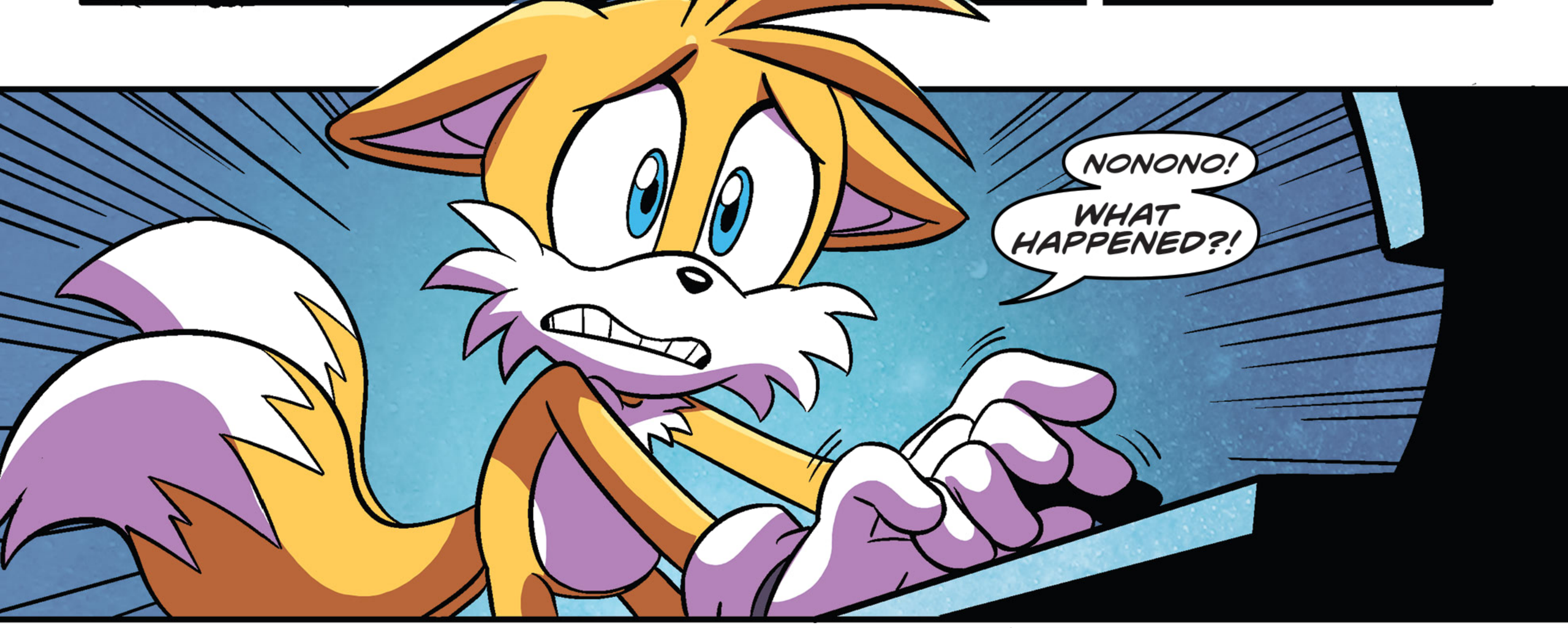
WHOOSH
NICE EXIT!

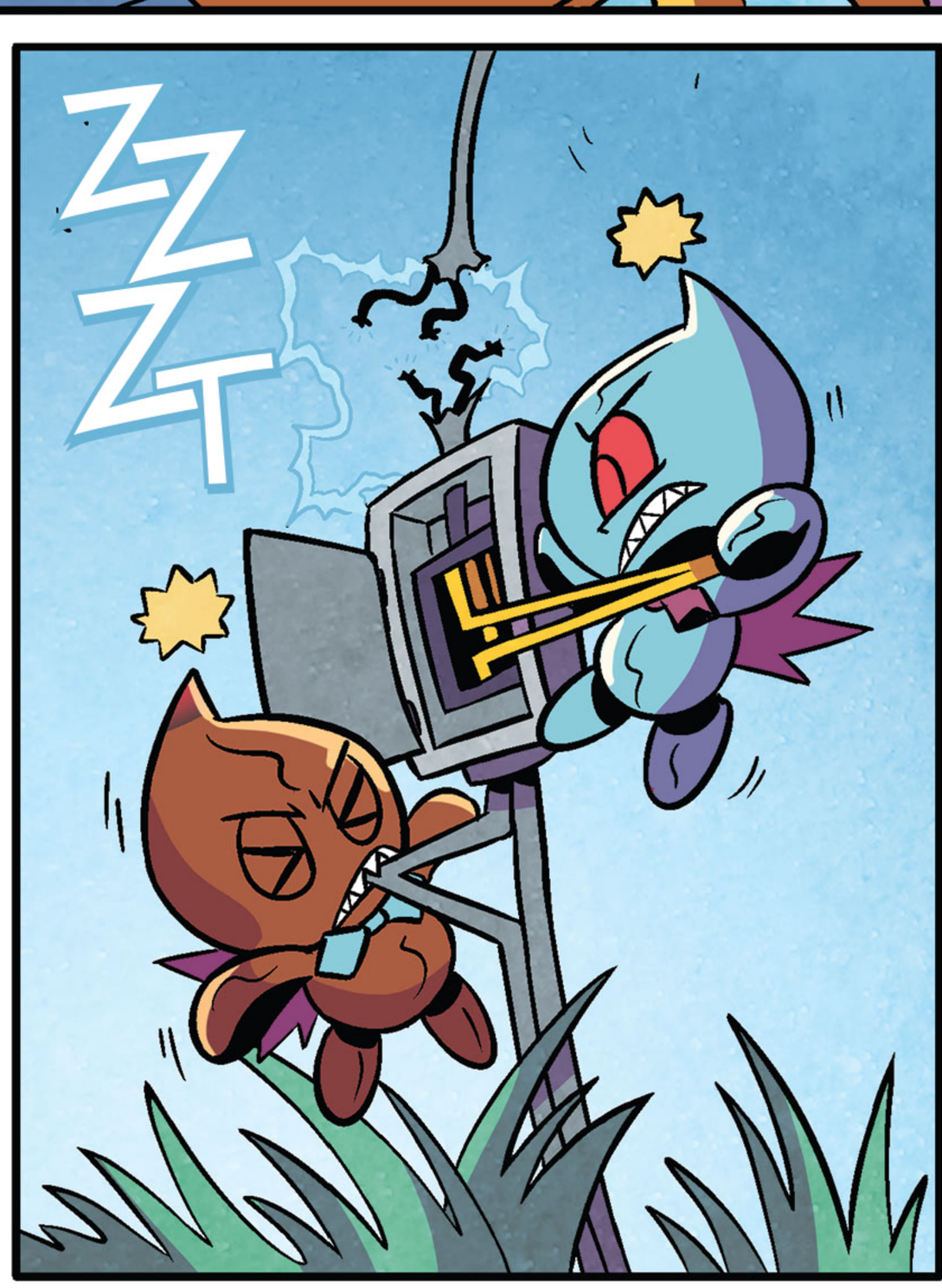

...EXCEPT NOW WE'RE A LONG WAY FROM THE RENDEZVOUS.
CALL TAILS?
TAILS? CAN YOU HEAR ME?
YEAH— ARE YOU OKAY?
WE'RE GOOD, BUT WE'VE GOT A WHOLE BUNCH OF ZOMBOTS BETWEEN US AND THE DOCK, AND NO ONE TO HELP US OUT. HOW'S THAT CURE COMING?
MY COMPUTER IS ALMOST DONE PROCESSING SONIC'S SPEED DATA!
BY APPLYING HIS BIOMETRICS TO THE FRESH SAMPLE OF VIRUS I GRABBED OUTSIDE, I CAN APPLY THE DATA IN REAL TIME TO TEST MODELS FOR IMMUNIZATION AND EVEN REVERSAL OF THE CONTAGION!
CURE, YES? CURE, NO?
Y-YES. I THINK... I THINK I'VE GOT IT!

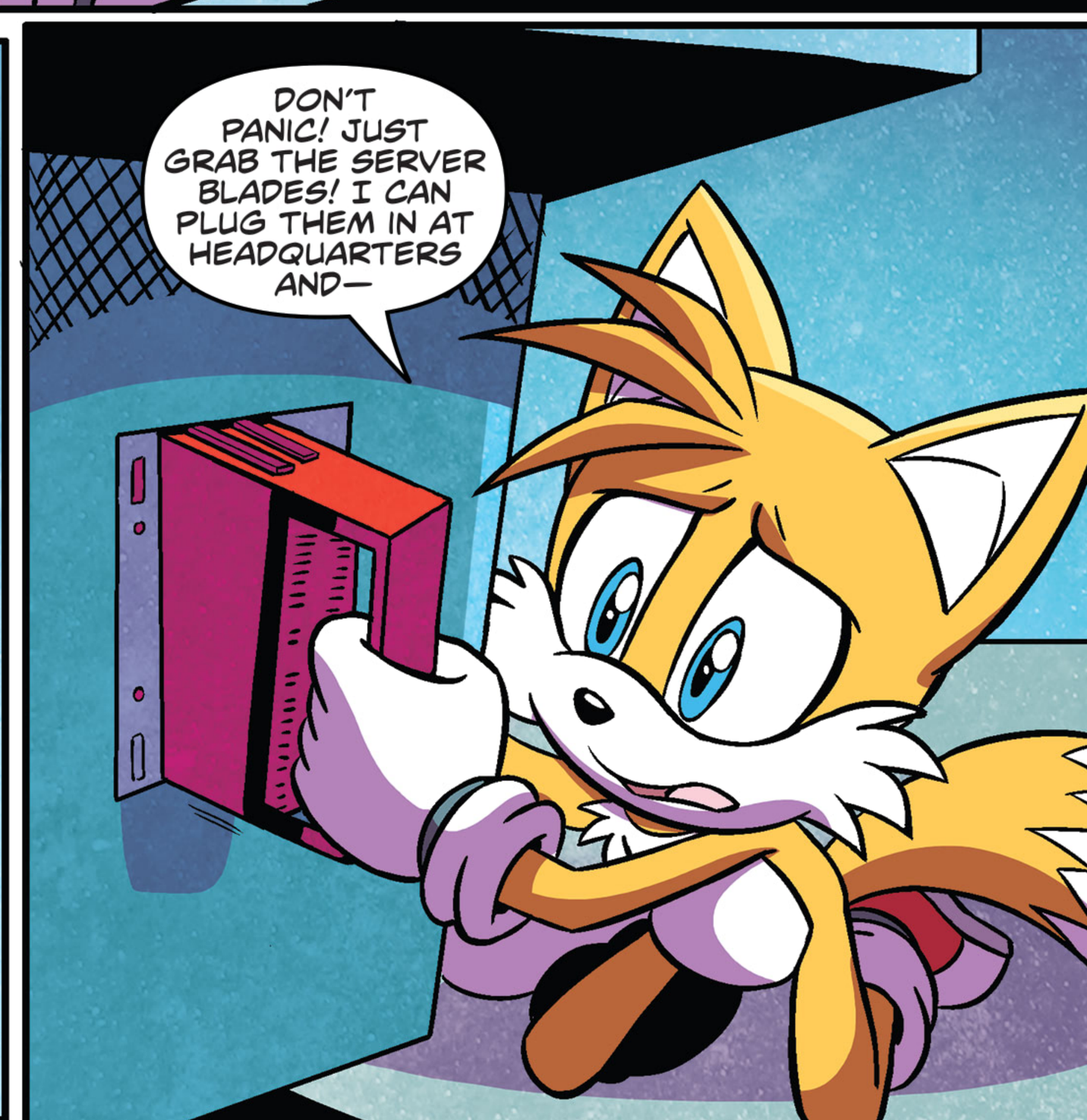

LET ME UPLOAD IT ALL TO RESTORATION HQ'S SERVER AND I'LL COME BACK YOU UP!

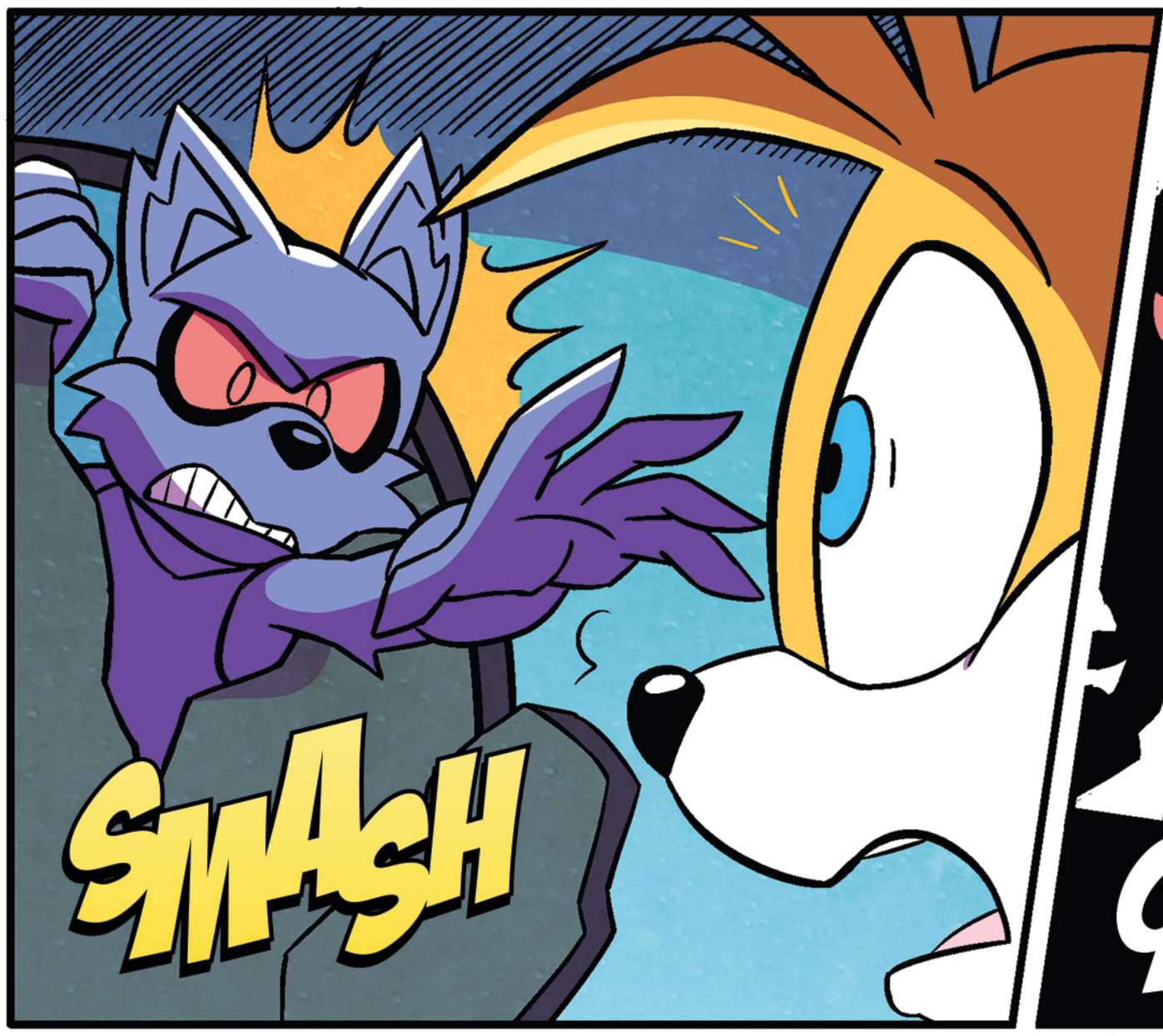

THE NIGHTMARE WILL FINALLY BE OVER!
WOO-HOO! WAY TO GO—


BYOOOOOW

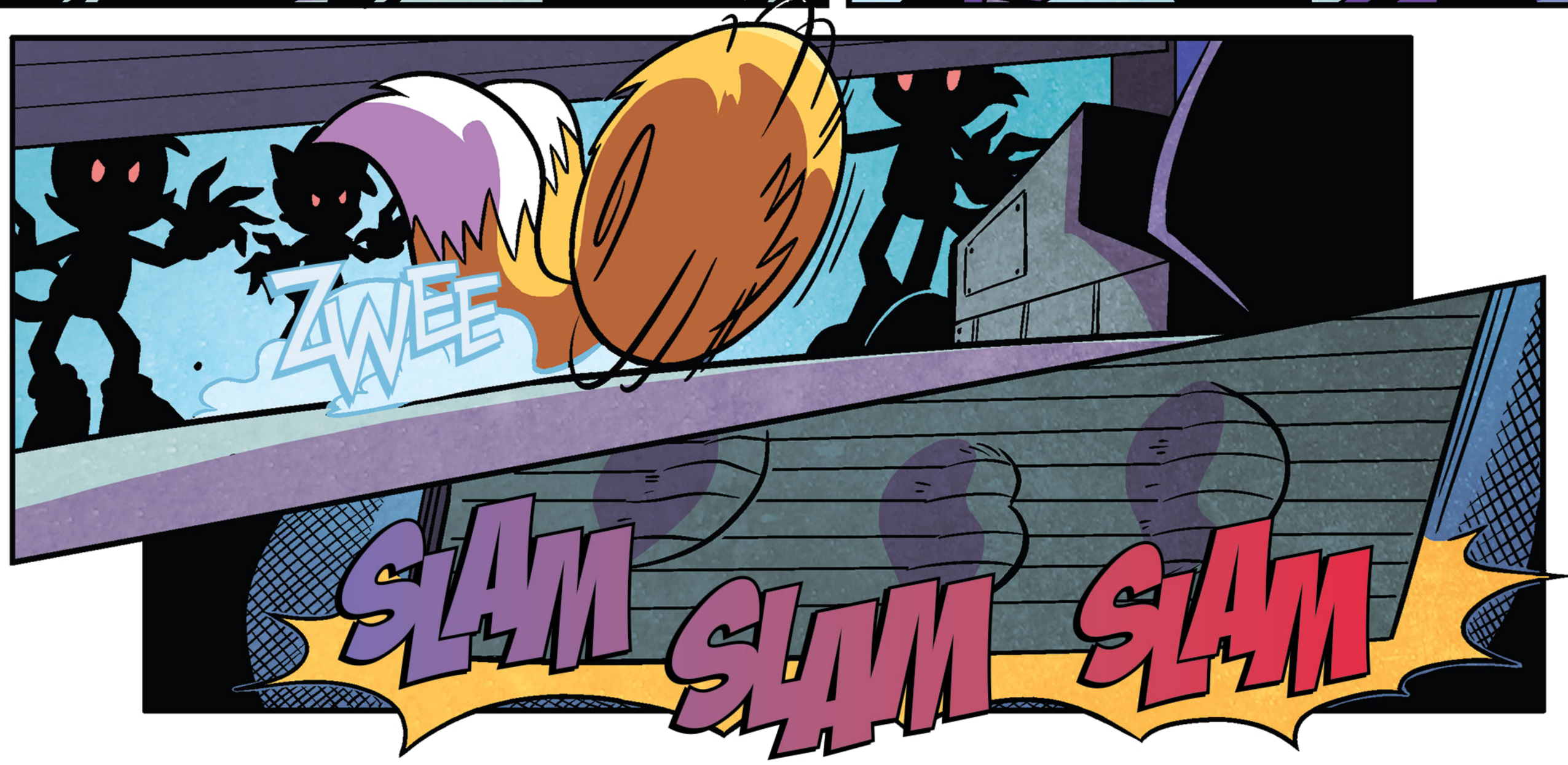

NONONO!
WHAT HAPPENED?!


ZZZT


DON'T PANIC! JUST GRAB THE SERVER BLADES! I CAN PLUG THEM IN AT HEADQUARTERS AND—


SMASH

CRASH


ZWEE
SLAM
SLAM
SLAM

BOM
I HAD IT. I WAS SO CLOSE.
AND I CAN'T BLAME YOU...
BOM
WHRRRR-CLICK
SCREEEECH

TAILS! WE'RE HEADING DOWN TO THE DOCK! WHERE ARE YOU?!

SCREEECH

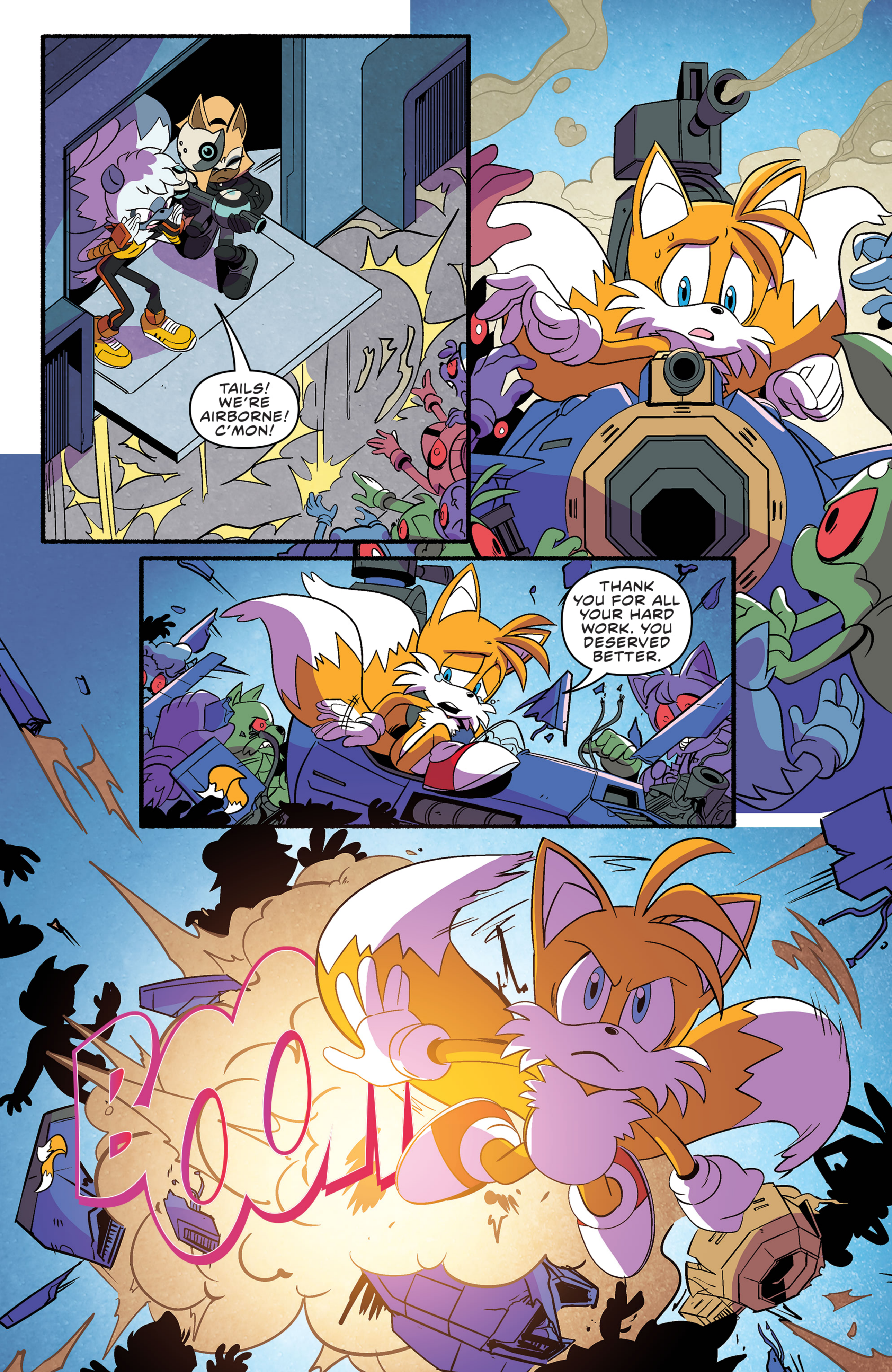
P-3a
THAT WAS AMAZING!
I'LL COVER YOU. GO PROTECT THE SURVIVORS.
GOTCHA! BUT I WANNA DRIVE THAT LATER!

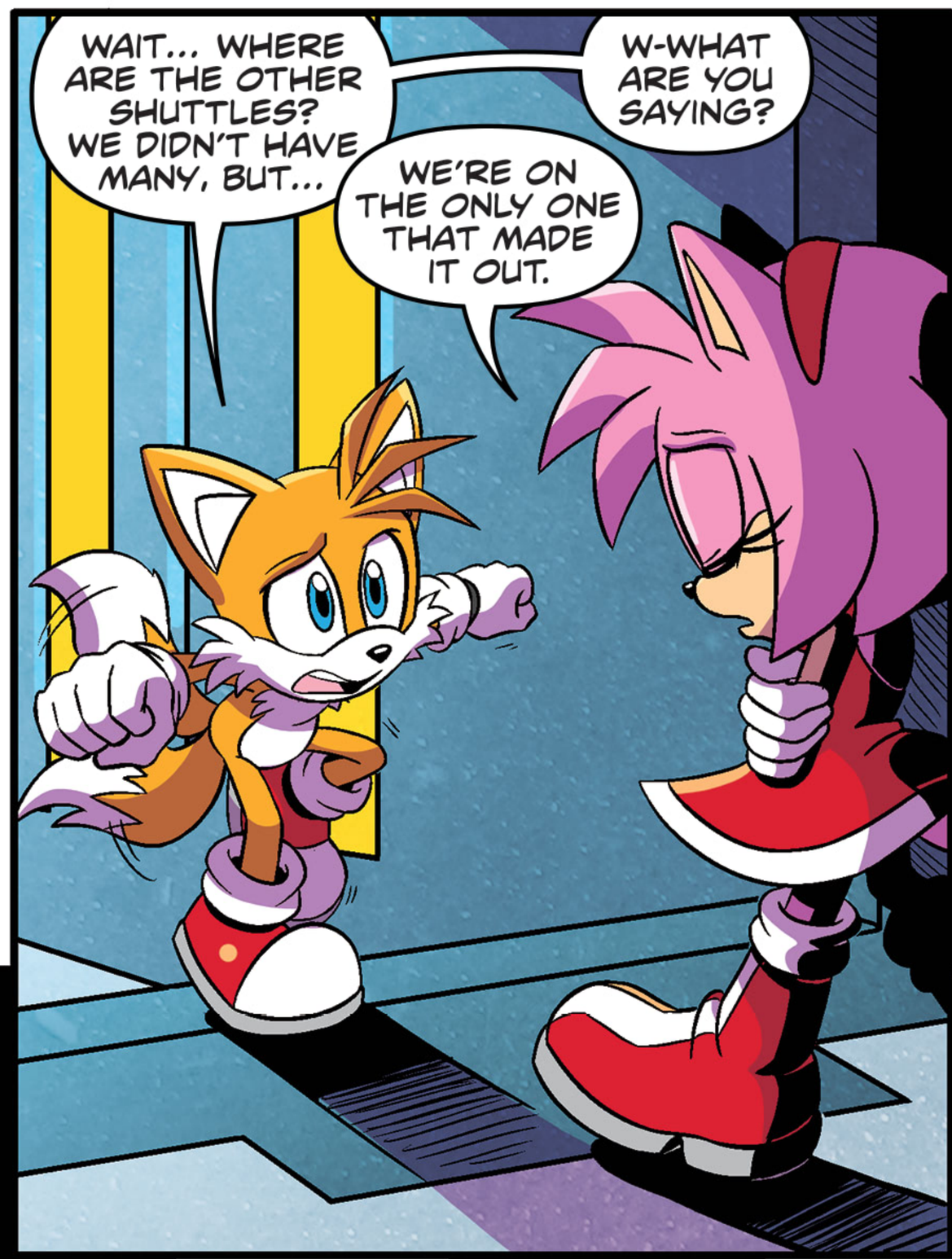
YEAH! WOO! PERFECT TIMING!
WHY... WHY IS THERE ONLY ONE?

ANY UNWELCOME GUESTS TRYING TO TAG ALONG?
CLEAR.

C'MON, PEOPLE! OUR RIDE IS HERE! HUSTLE! HUSTLE! HUSTLE!

BOOM


TAILS! WE'RE AIRBORNE! C'MON!
THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK. YOU DESERVED BETTER.
BOOM!



RESTORATION HQ HAS FALLEN, AND ALMOST EVERYONE WITH IT.

ART BY **AARON HAMMERSTROM** INKS & COLORS BY **PRISCILLA TRAMONTANO**

ART BY **RYAN JAMPOLE**

RESTORATION HQ.

HOO-BOY... LET'S SEE WHERE WE ARE...

SONIC'S RUNNING AROUND GETTING DATA FOR TAILS. HE SHOULD BE NEAR BARRICADE TOWN BY NOW, I THINK.*

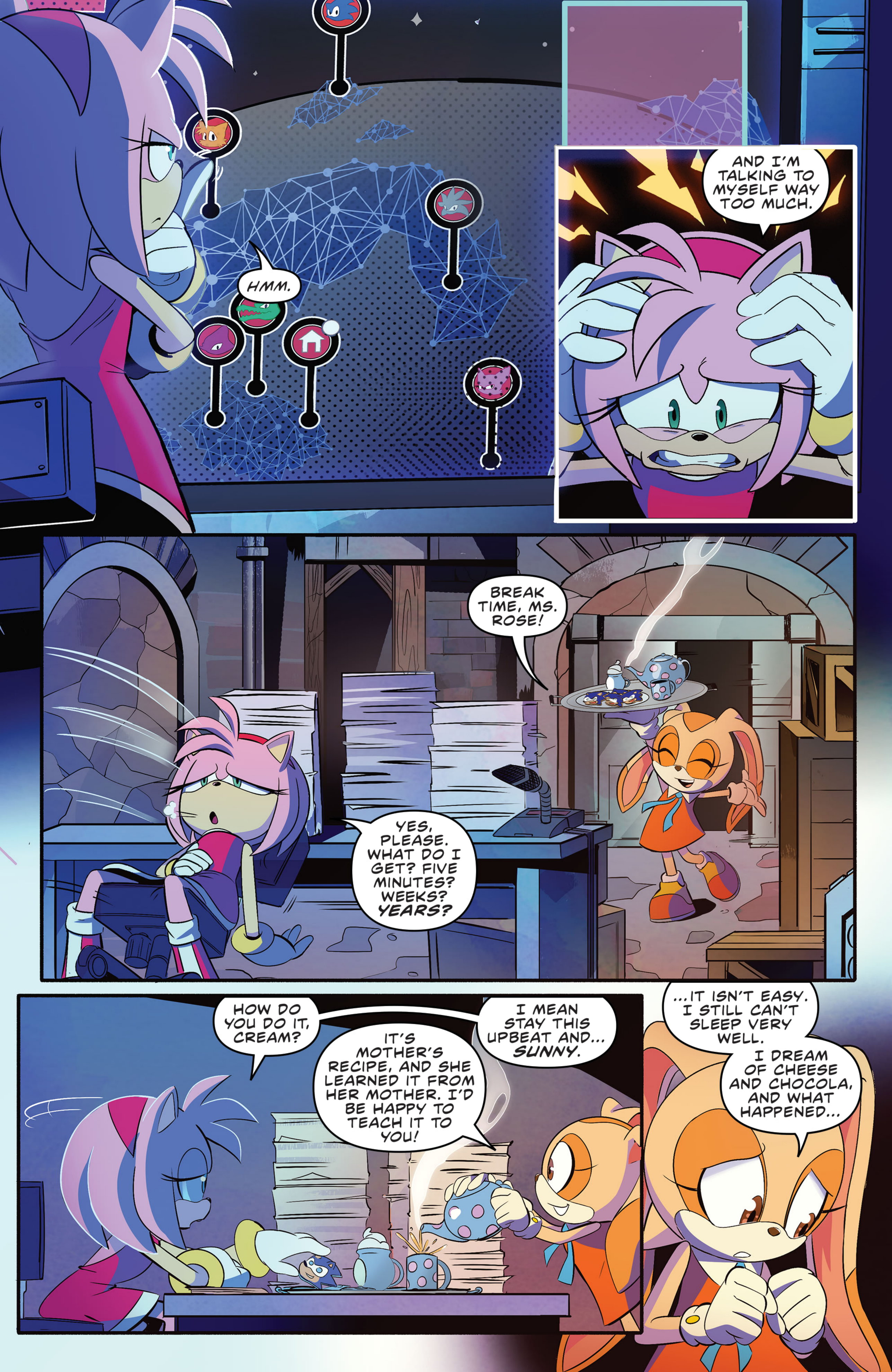
TAILS IS DOING HIS RESEARCH IN CENTRAL CITY WHILE TANGLE AND WHISPER COVER SUPPORT AND EVACUATION.**

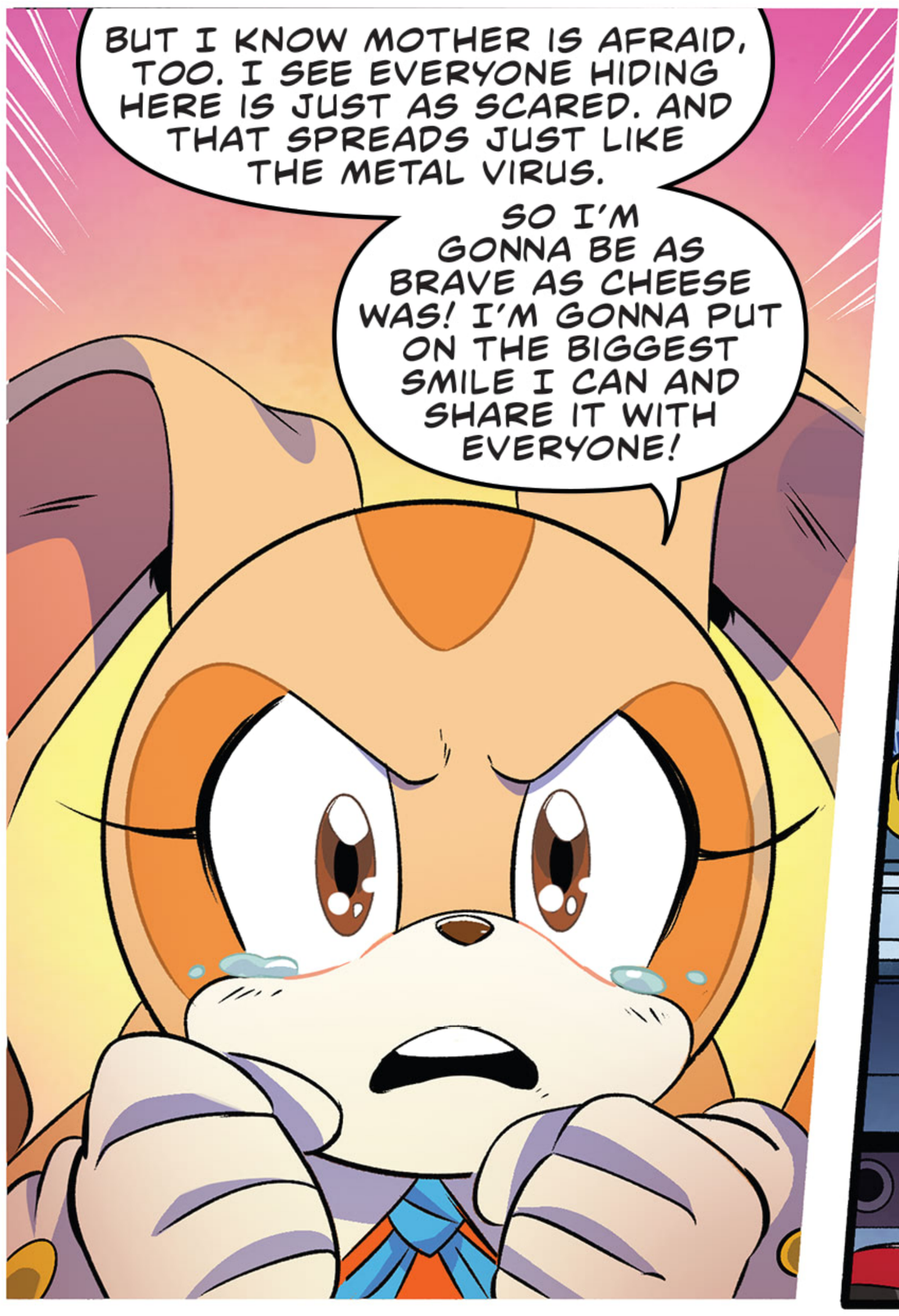
SILVER IS HANDLING THE EVACUATION OF ICE PARADISE ON HIS OWN.

LOOKS LIKE VECTOR AND ESPIO JUST GOT BACK WITH THE REFUGEES FROM PINE GROVE VILLAGE.

=SIGH= ROUGE IS STILL MISSING IN ACTION.

EDITOR'S NOTE:
*HAPPENING "NOW" IN STH#23
**HAPPENING "NOW" IN STH#21

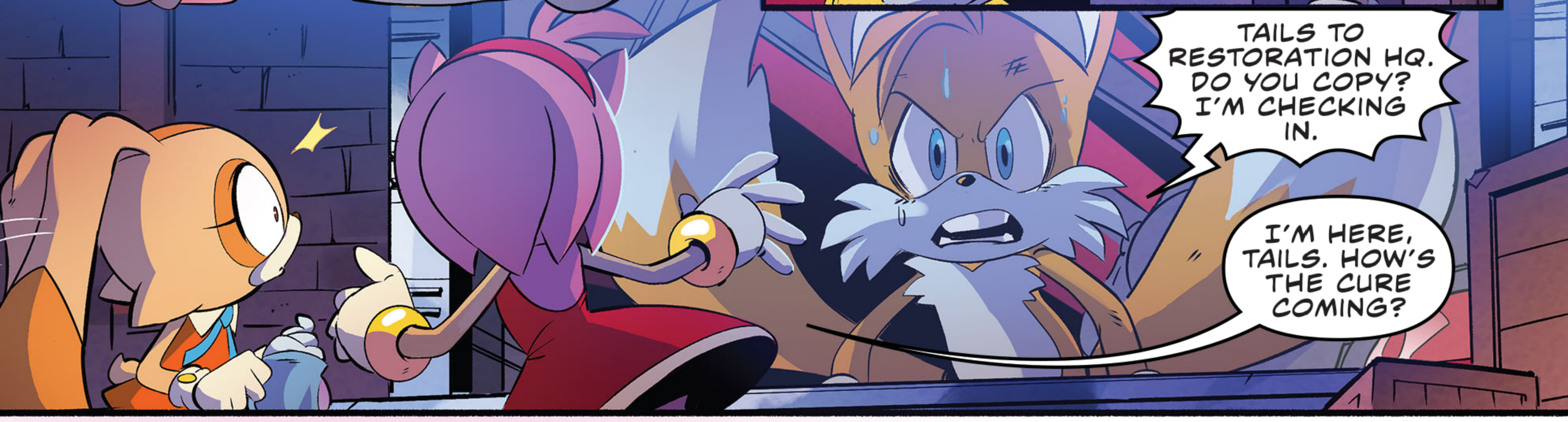

HMM.
AND I'M TALKING TO MYSELF WAY TOO MUCH.
BREAK TIME, MS. ROSE!
YES, PLEASE. WHAT DO I GET? FIVE MINUTES? WEEKS? YEARS?
HOW DO YOU DO IT, CREAM?
IT'S MOTHER'S RECIPE, AND SHE LEARNED IT FROM HER MOTHER. I'D BE HAPPY TO TEACH IT TO YOU!
I MEAN STAY THIS UPBEAT AND... SUNNY.
...IT ISN'T EASY. I STILL CAN'T SLEEP VERY WELL.
I DREAM OF CHEESE AND CHOCOLA, AND WHAT HAPPENED...


BUT I KNOW MOTHER IS AFRAID, TOO. I SEE EVERYONE HIDING HERE IS JUST AS SCARED. AND THAT SPREADS JUST LIKE THE METAL VIRUS.
SO I'M GONNA BE AS BRAVE AS CHEESE WAS! I'M GONNA PUT ON THE BIGGEST SMILE I CAN AND SHARE IT WITH EVERYONE!

AND I CAN DO THAT BECAUSE OF YOU. YOU'RE A HERO, AND AN ADVENTURER, AND YOU NEVER GIVE UP! YOU AND MR. SONIC AND ALL OUR FRIENDS WILL FIND A WAY TO SAVE US.
SO WHY BE SAD WHEN I KNOW THINGS WILL BE OKAY IN THE END?

YOU'RE MY HERO TOO, CREAM. THANK YOU SO MUCH.

NOW THEN—HOW DO YOU TAKE YOUR TEA?
RIGHT NOW? PLAIN'S FINE. I JUST NEED SOMETHING TO KEEP ME UP.


TAILS TO RESTORATION HQ. DO YOU COPY? I'M CHECKING IN.
I'M HERE, TAILS. HOW'S THE CURE COMING?

MEANWHILE, ON LOST HEX...
WE'VE BEEN GRANTED A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY.
EGGMAN'S NEWEST PATSY HAS INVITED US INTO HIS BASE. HE EXPECTS US TO FIX THE CRISIS ON THE WORLD BELOW.
WE WILL ACCEPT HIS HOSPITALITY AND THEN *PUNISH* HIM FOR IT.
UNLESS, Y'KNOW, THIS IS ANOTHER TRAP. I'D RATHER NOT BE EGGMAN'S SLAVE AGAIN, 'KAY? THANKS.
YOU DARE?
WE UNDERESTIMATED THE DOCTOR THE FIRST TIME. THIS TIME WE ARE PREPARED. WE WILL PUNISH HIM FOR OUR HUMILIATION.
WE WILL DESTROY SONIC FOR DEFEATING US. AND WE WILL GRIND THEIR WORLD TO DUST IN RETRIBUTION.

THANK YOU FOR THE REFRESHMENTS. I'D LOVE TO RELAX WITH YOU, BUT I SHOULD GET BACK TO WORK.
ME TOO.
QUIT SHOVIN'!
FROGGY?! WHERE ARE YOU?!
IS THIS ALL THE SPACE THEY HAVE?
WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH ROOM FOR EVERYONE...
I SAID BACK OFF, MACK!

UNIT'S DESIGNATION IS NOT "MACK." IT IS GEMERL.

I DON'T CARE IF IT WERE "KING OF EVERYTHING"! YOU AIN'T THROWIN' CHARMY OUT!

YOU HAVE BROUGHT IN A ZOMBOT. HE IS A PATHOGENIC THREAT TO CREAM. HE MUST BE REMOVED.

HE GOT INFECTED BY BEIN' A HERO!

I DIDN'T CARRY THIS CONTAINMENT BUBBLE EVERY-WHERE AND TRACK HIM DOWN JUST FOR YOU TO THROW HIM OUT!

THE CHAOTIX DON'T ABANDON THEIR OWN! I'LL LOOK AFTER HIM! AND I'LL HAVE AN EASIER TIME WITHOUT YOU BREATHING DOWN MY NECK!

THIS UNIT DOES NOT BREATHE.

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!

GEMERL! IT'S OKAY!

NEGATIVE. CHARMY BEE IS A THREAT TO YOUR HEALTH.

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS, REMEMBER?*

AFFIRMATIVE. CHARMY BEE IS A VICTIM. BUT...

MR. VECTOR AND MR. ESPIO WILL TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM.

THEY WON'T LET ANYONE GET SICK FROM HIM.

*STH #18.

I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERN, BUT VECTOR HAS A SOLID PLAN.

WE'LL SECURELY STORE CHARMY IN TAILS'S LAB ALONGSIDE OMEGA.

ONCE TAILS HAS FOUND THE CURE, CHARMY WILL BE IMMEDIATELY ACCESSIBLE.

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A WONDERFUL PLAN!

IT IS... ACCEPTABLE.

DON'T BE DISCOURAGED. YOU'LL LEARN TO THINK LIKE US ONE DAY.

ILLOGICALLY AND SELF-DESTRUCTIVELY?

ER... NO...

SHEESH, NOT MUCH ROOM TO MOVE, HUH? IS THIS INCH TAKEN?
IT'S FINE.

I'VE BEEN HERE FOR A WHILE. YOU?
J-JUST GOT IN FROM PINE GROVE VILLAGE.
NEVER BEEN.

I-IT WAS N-NICE...
I'M SURE IT WAS.
I'M FROM GLASS HILL. EGGMAN DIDN'T COME ANYWHERE NEAR US. IT WAS ALL ZOMBOTS FROM OTHER PLACES THAT JUST WANDERED INTO TOWN AND...

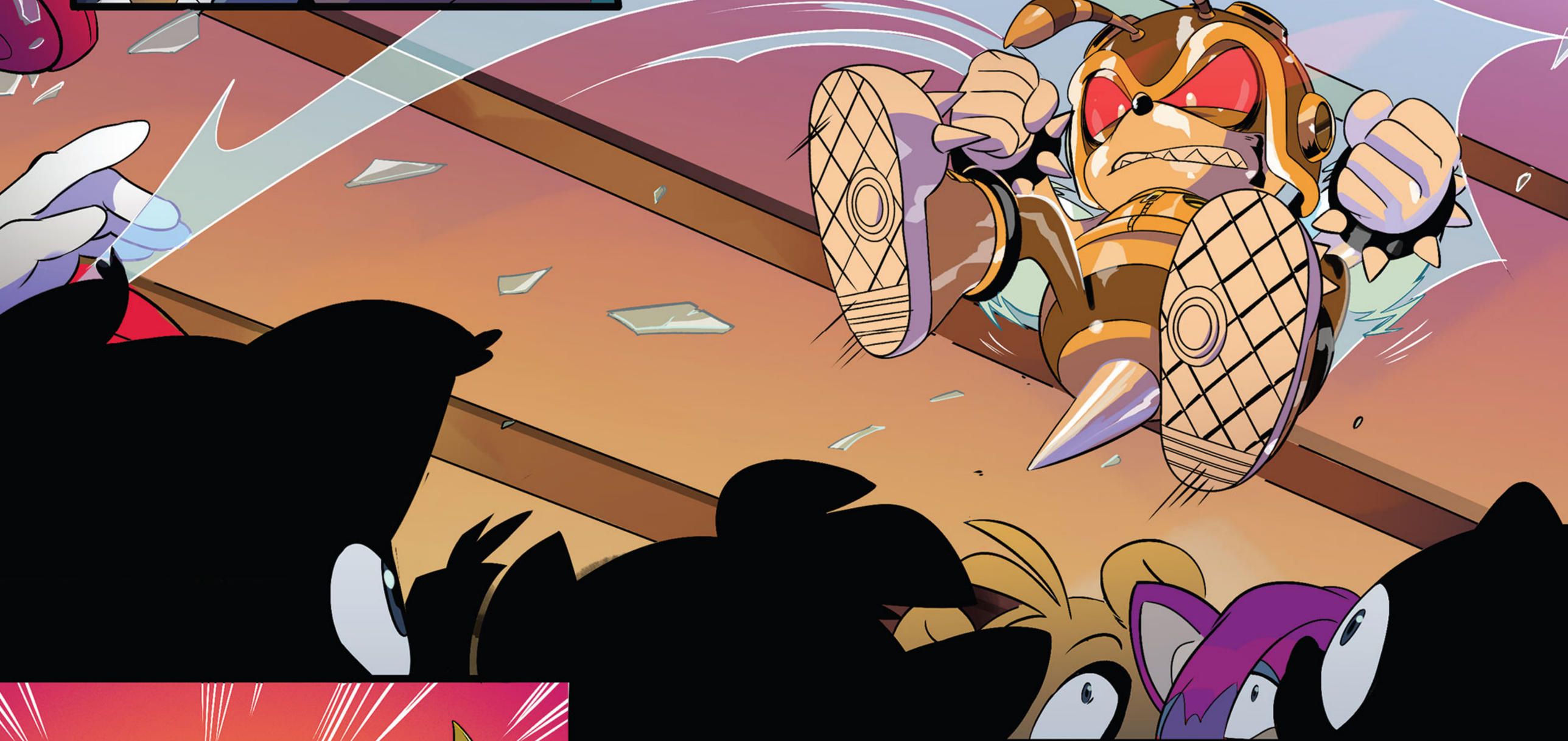
HEY! ARE YOU OKAY?
I-I'M S-S-SORRY...

...I... I JUST... D-DIDN'T WANT TO BE ALONE...

ZOMBOT! IT'S A ZOMBOT!
AHHH!
NOO!
HELP!
EVERYONE STAY CALM! DON'T-OOF!
LOOK OUT, CREAM!
NO! CHARMY!
KRIK
LEMME THROUGH! IT'S GONNA-

CHNK

SPASH
AHHH! RUN! HELP!



MOTHER?!

ALUOOGA
ALUOOGA

ALUOOGAAALUOOGAAALUOOGA

...OH NO...

ALL PILOTS TO YOUR SHUTTLES. PREP FOR IMMEDIATE TAKE-OFF!

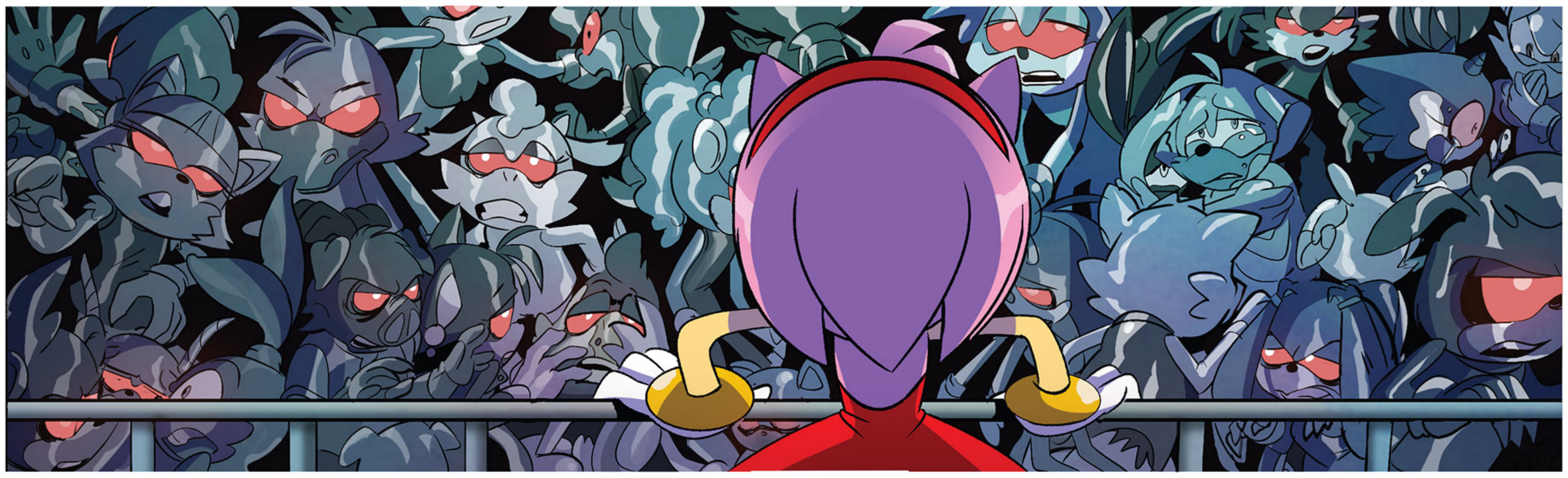
RESTORATION HQ HAS BEEN COMPROMISED! I'M INITIATING A FULL EVAC!

ALL FIELD TEAMS! WE–

CLANG

PIKO

HOW BAD IS IT?
TEN PERCENT INFECTION AND GROWING EXPONENTIALLY. I CANNOT CONTAIN ACTIVE ZOMBOTS.
GRAB OMEGA AND GET TO THE LAUNCH BAY! SCAN EVERYONE WHO TRIES TO GET IN!
NEGATIVE. I MUST PROTECT CREAM. I LOST HER WHEN I WAS ATTACKED. I MUST...
YOU'RE THE FASTEST ONE HERE, AND WE'LL NEED TAILS TO REBUILD OMEGA LATER TO PROTECT EVERYONE.
GET OMEGA. GET TO THE SHUTTLES. I'LL FIND CREAM AND BRING HER RIGHT TO YOU.
ORDERS ACKNOWLEDGED.



PIKO

CREAM! WE'VE GOT TO GO!
PIKO

MUH... MUH... MUH...
...MOTHER!
MS. ROSE! PLEASE! GET MY LITTLE GIRL TO SAFETY!

PIKO
THANK YOU.
NO! MOTHER! NO!

NO! GO BACK! GO BACK!
GEMERL?
MISSION OBJECTIVES COMPLETE. SCANNING... YOU ARE BOTH FREE OF INFECTION.
G-GO BACK... PLEASE...
WHERE ARE THE OTHER PILOTS?
ONLY ONE MADE IT THROUGH. NOT THAT MANY OF THE REFUGEES MADE IT, EITHER.
GO FIND YOUR SEAT. I'LL BE WITH YOU IN JUST A SECOND, OKAY?

SCAN COMPLETE. EVERYONE WITHIN IS INFECTED TO SOME DEGREE.
ALL RIGHT. LET'S CLOSE IT UP BEFORE...
OH, NO, YOU DON'T!
I SWEAR, KID. YOU'RE *SUCH* A PAIN IN MY TAIL.
VECTOR—!

VECTOR IS COMPROMISED. IMMEDIATE QUARANTINE REQUIRED.
YEAH-YEAH-YEAH. I GUESS THIS IS WHAT I GET FOR LOOKIN' AFTER MY OWN.
I'LL BEAT 'EM BACK! CLOSE UP THE DOOR BEHIND ME!
HEY, ESPIO, YOU'RE LEAD DETECTIVE NOW.
CLANG

VECTOR IS... VERY STRONG.
AS A ZOMBOT, HE WILL BREAK DOWN THE DOORS SOON.
SNIFF Y-YOU'RE RIGHT. WE NEED TO GO.
ESPIO... C'MON. WE'VE GOT TO ESCAPE.
R-ROGER THAT...
WHOOSH

SOON— CENTRAL CITY BAY.

C'MON, PEOPLE! OUR RIDE IS HERE! HUSTLE! HUSTLE! HUSTLE!

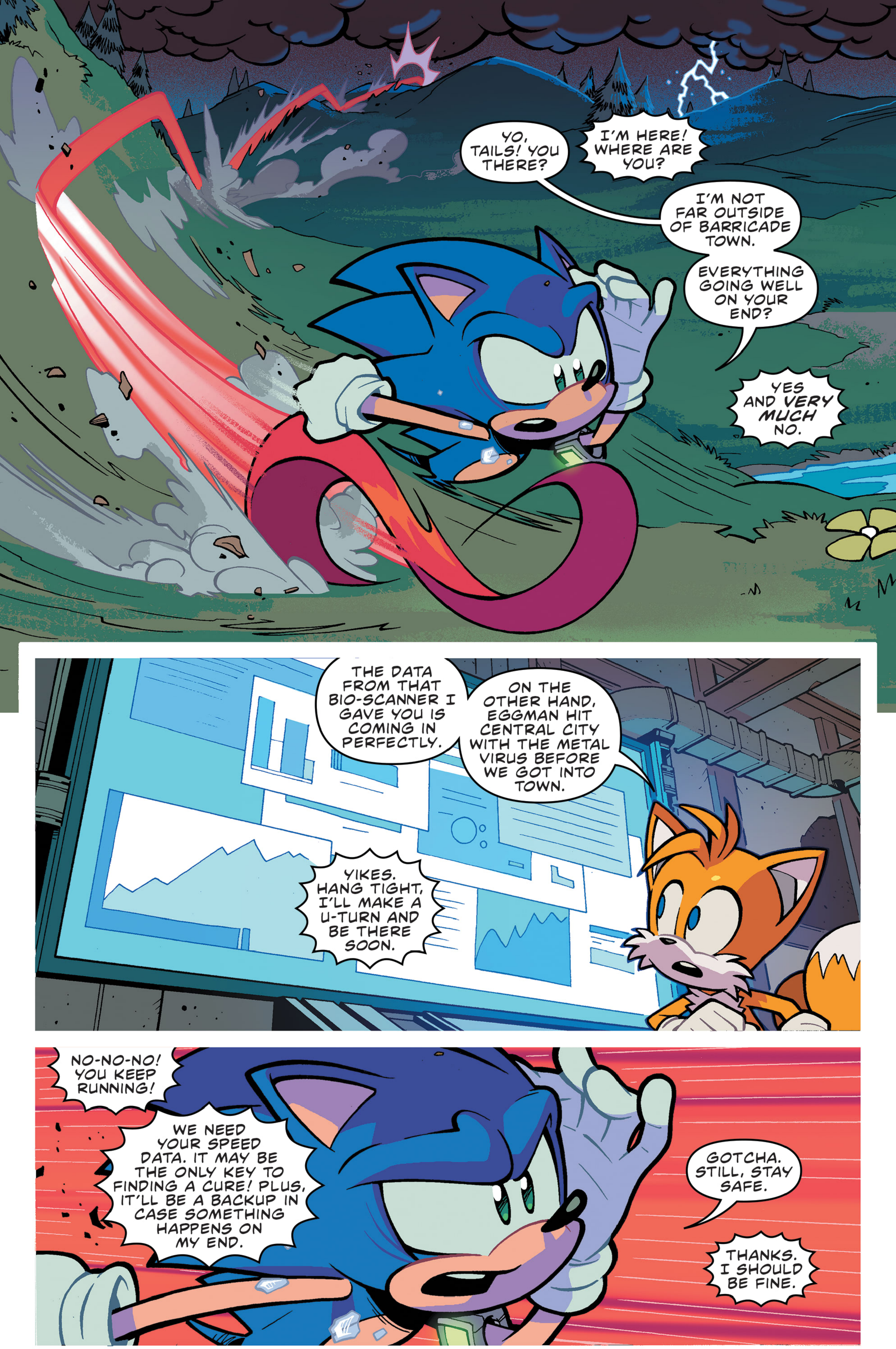
TAILS! WE'RE AIRBORNE! C'MON!

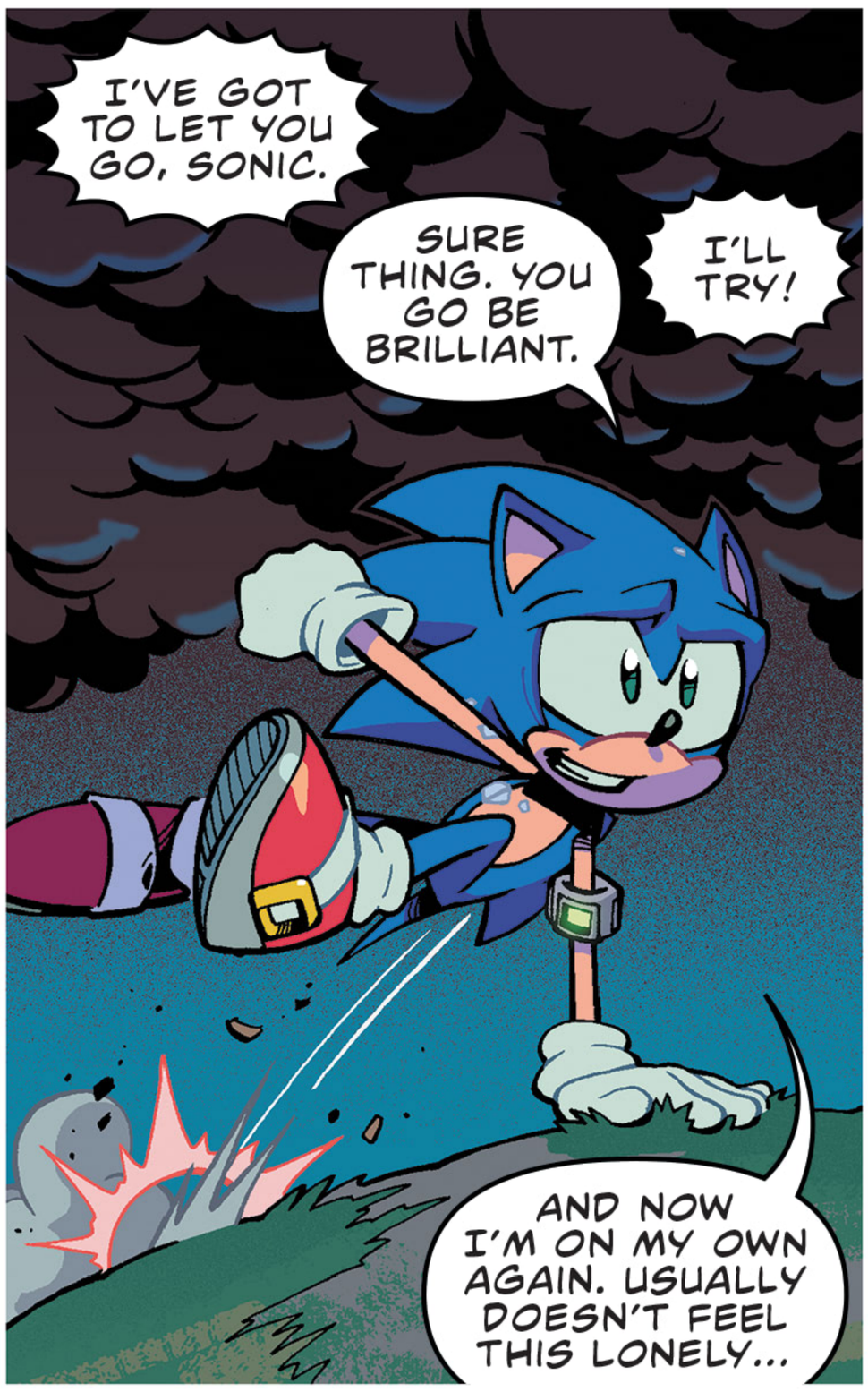
BOOM

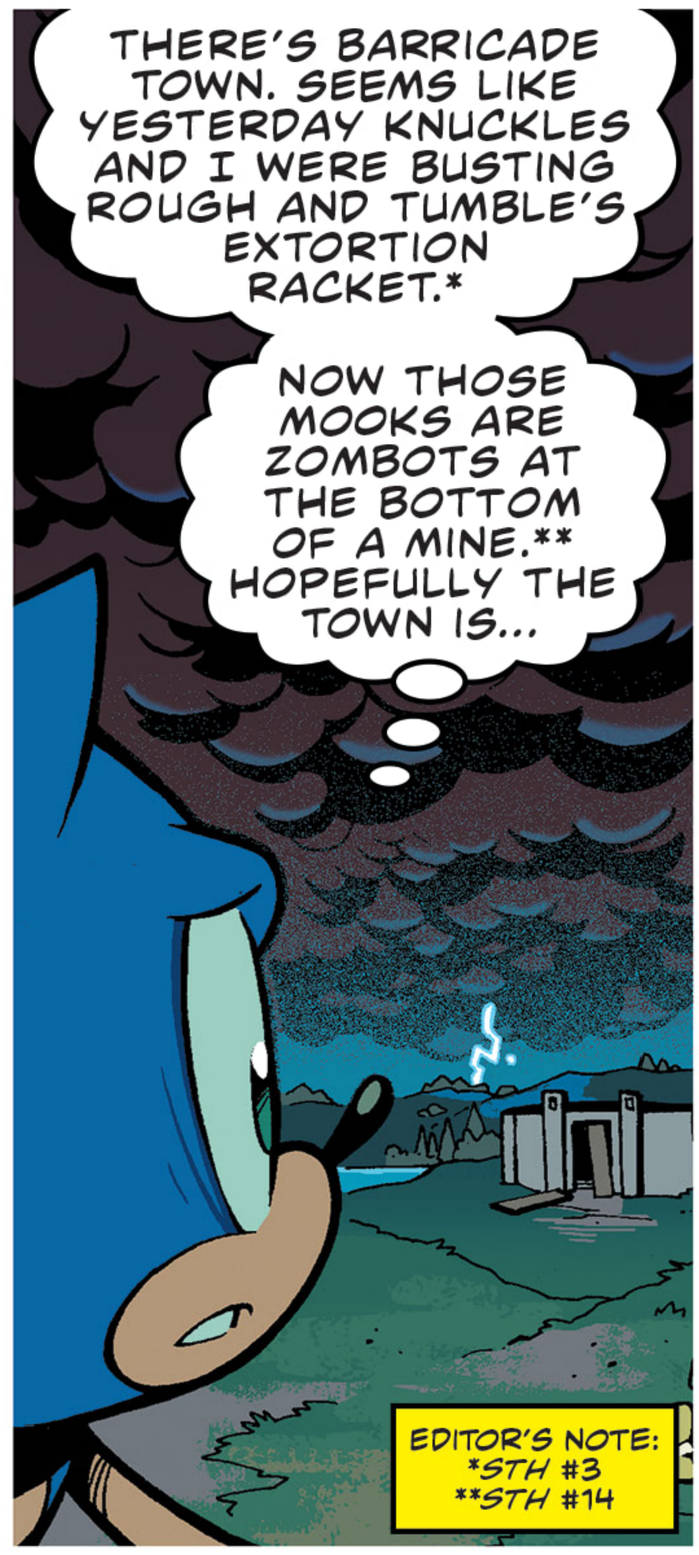
WAIT... WHERE ARE THE OTHER SHUTTLES? WE DIDN'T HAVE MANY, BUT...
WE'RE ON THE ONLY ONE THAT MADE IT OUT.
W-WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
RESTORATION HQ HAS FALLEN, AND ALMOST EVERYONE WITH IT.
AUGH! NO-NO-NO! EVEN IF THE UPLOAD WAS INCOMPLETE, I COULD'VE STILL DONE SOMETHING IN MY LAB THERE!
YOU MEAN THE DATA FOR THE CURE? IT'S...?
GONE! THE ZOMBOTS TRASHED EVERYTHING!
OUR ONLY HOPE NOW IS THAT SONIC GETS BACK WITH HIS DATA ANALYZER INTACT.
JEWEL? YEAH, I CAN HEAR—SLOW DOWN. WHAT'S HAPPENING?

ART BY **DIANA SKELLY**

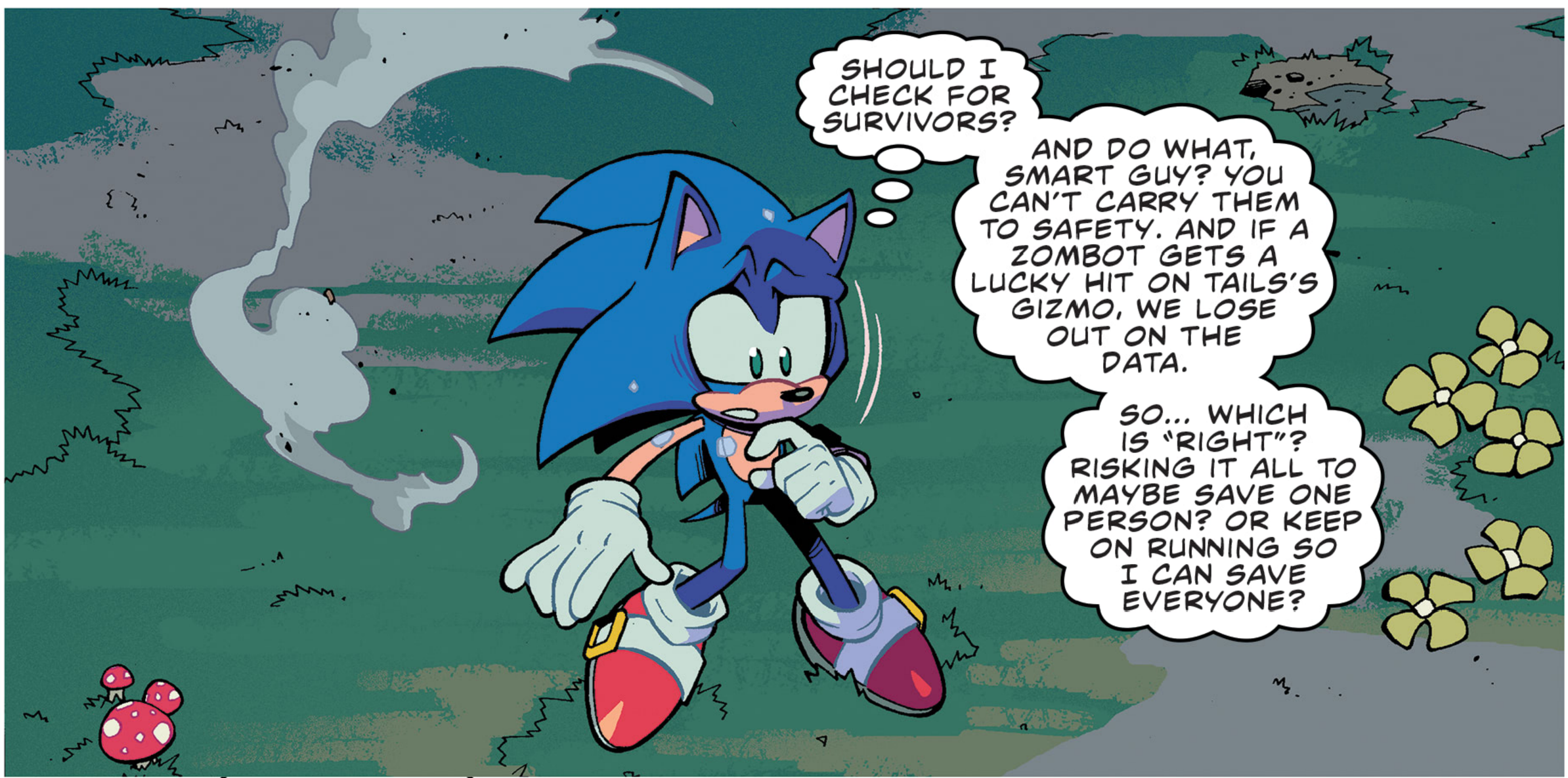
ART BY PRISCILLA TRAMONTANO


YO, TAILS! YOU THERE?
I'M HERE! WHERE ARE YOU?
I'M NOT FAR OUTSIDE OF BARRICADE TOWN.
EVERYTHING GOING WELL ON YOUR END?
YES AND VERY MUCH NO.
THE DATA FROM THAT BIO-SCANNER I GAVE YOU IS COMING IN PERFECTLY.
ON THE OTHER HAND, EGGMAN HIT CENTRAL CITY WITH THE METAL VIRUS BEFORE WE GOT INTO TOWN.
YIKES. HANG TIGHT, I'LL MAKE A U-TURN AND BE THERE SOON.
NO-NO-NO! YOU KEEP RUNNING!
WE NEED YOUR SPEED DATA. IT MAY BE THE ONLY KEY TO FINDING A CURE! PLUS, IT'LL BE A BACKUP IN CASE SOMETHING HAPPENS ON MY END.
GOTCHA. STILL, STAY SAFE.
THANKS. I SHOULD BE FINE.

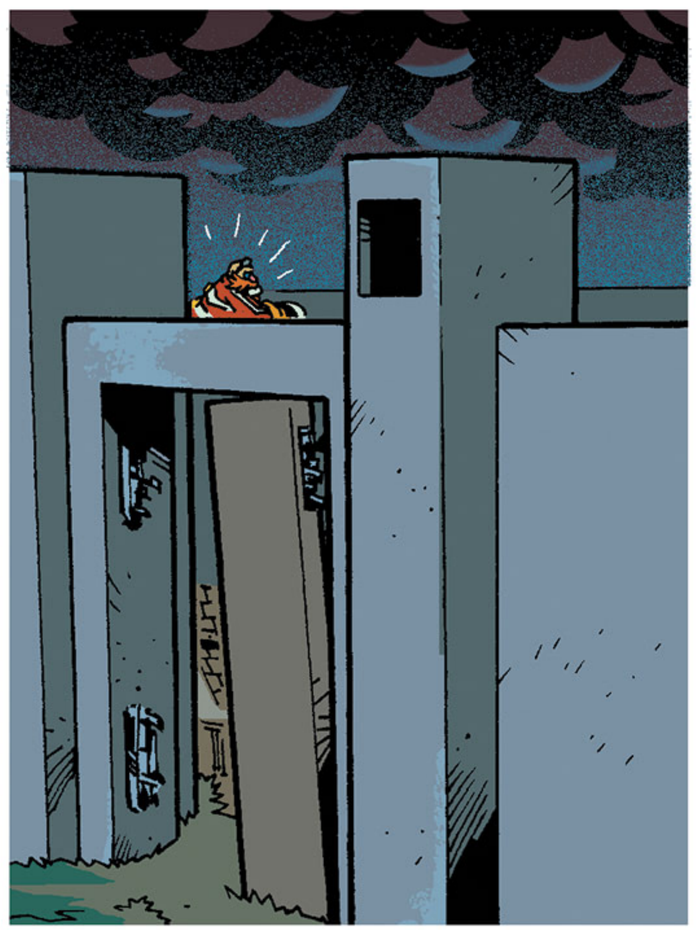

I'VE GOT TO LET YOU GO, SONIC.
SURE THING. YOU GO BE BRILLIANT.
I'LL TRY!
AND NOW I'M ON MY OWN AGAIN. USUALLY DOESN'T FEEL THIS LONELY...


THERE'S BARRICADE TOWN. SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY KNUCKLES AND I WERE BUSTING ROUGH AND TUMBLE'S EXTORTION RACKET.*
NOW THOSE MOOKS ARE ZOMBOTS AT THE BOTTOM OF A MINE.** HOPEFULLY THE TOWN IS...
EDITOR'S NOTE: *STH #3 **STH #14

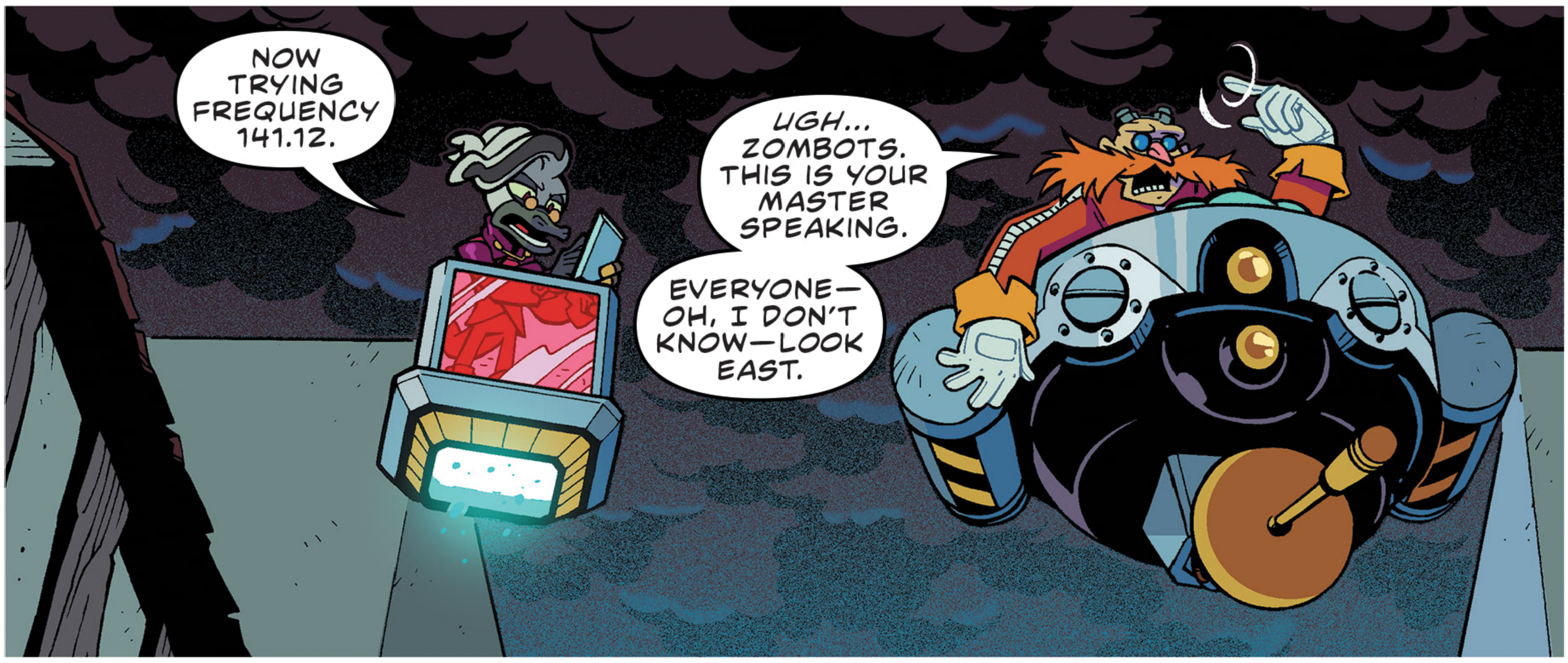
...NOPE. LOOKS LIKE IT FELL TO THE METAL VIRUS, TOO.


SHOULD I CHECK FOR SURVIVORS?
AND DO WHAT, SMART GUY? YOU CAN'T CARRY THEM TO SAFETY. AND IF A ZOMBOT GETS A LUCKY HIT ON TAILS'S GIZMO, WE LOSE OUT ON THE DATA.
SO... WHICH IS "RIGHT"? RISKING IT ALL TO MAYBE SAVE ONE PERSON? OR KEEP ON RUNNING SO I CAN SAVE EVERYONE?

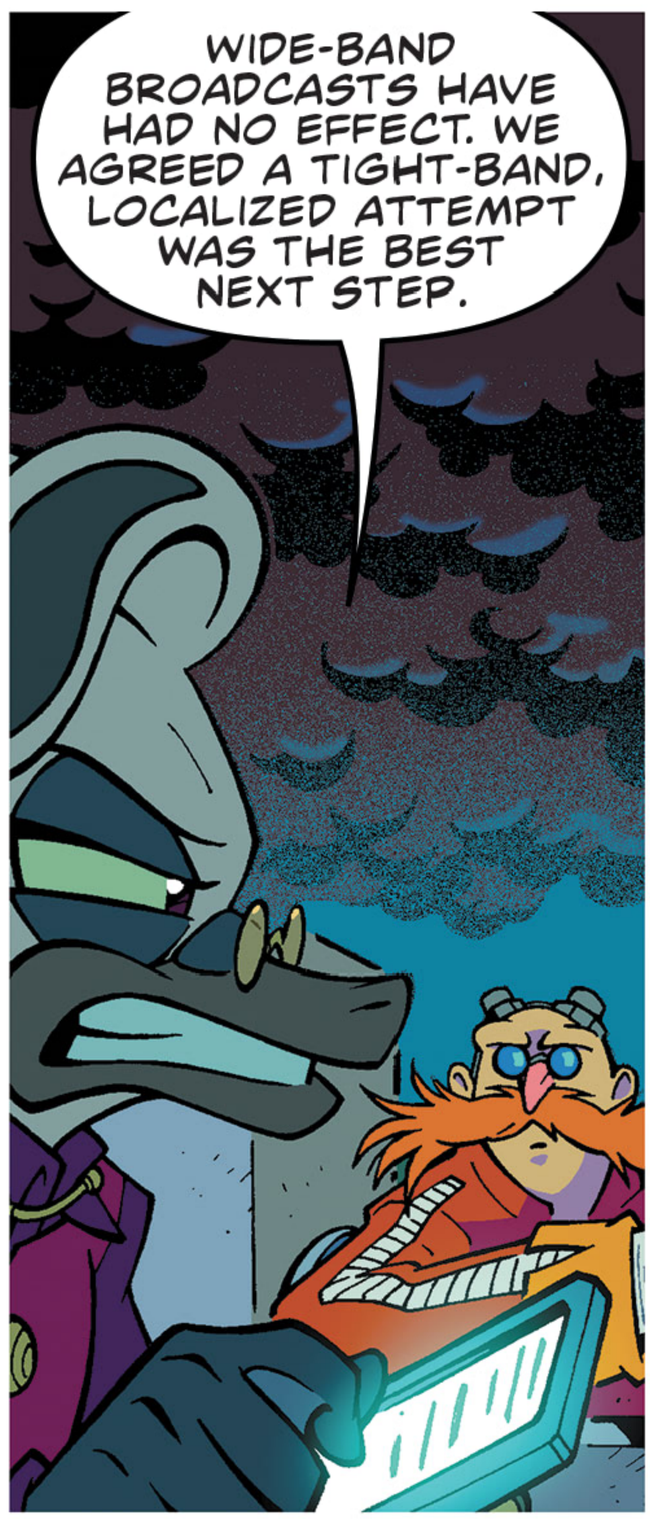
WAITAMINUTE... IS THAT...?

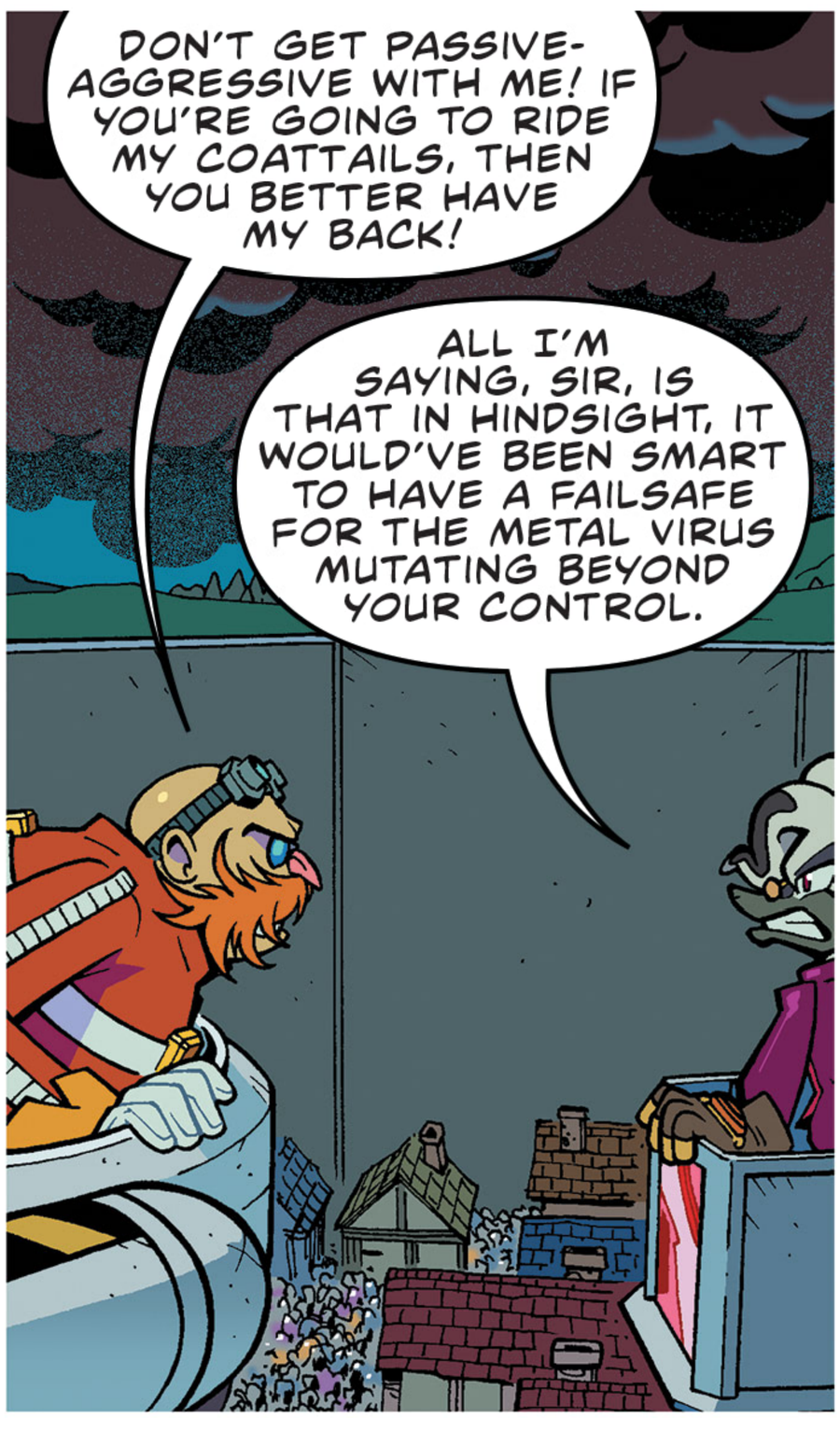


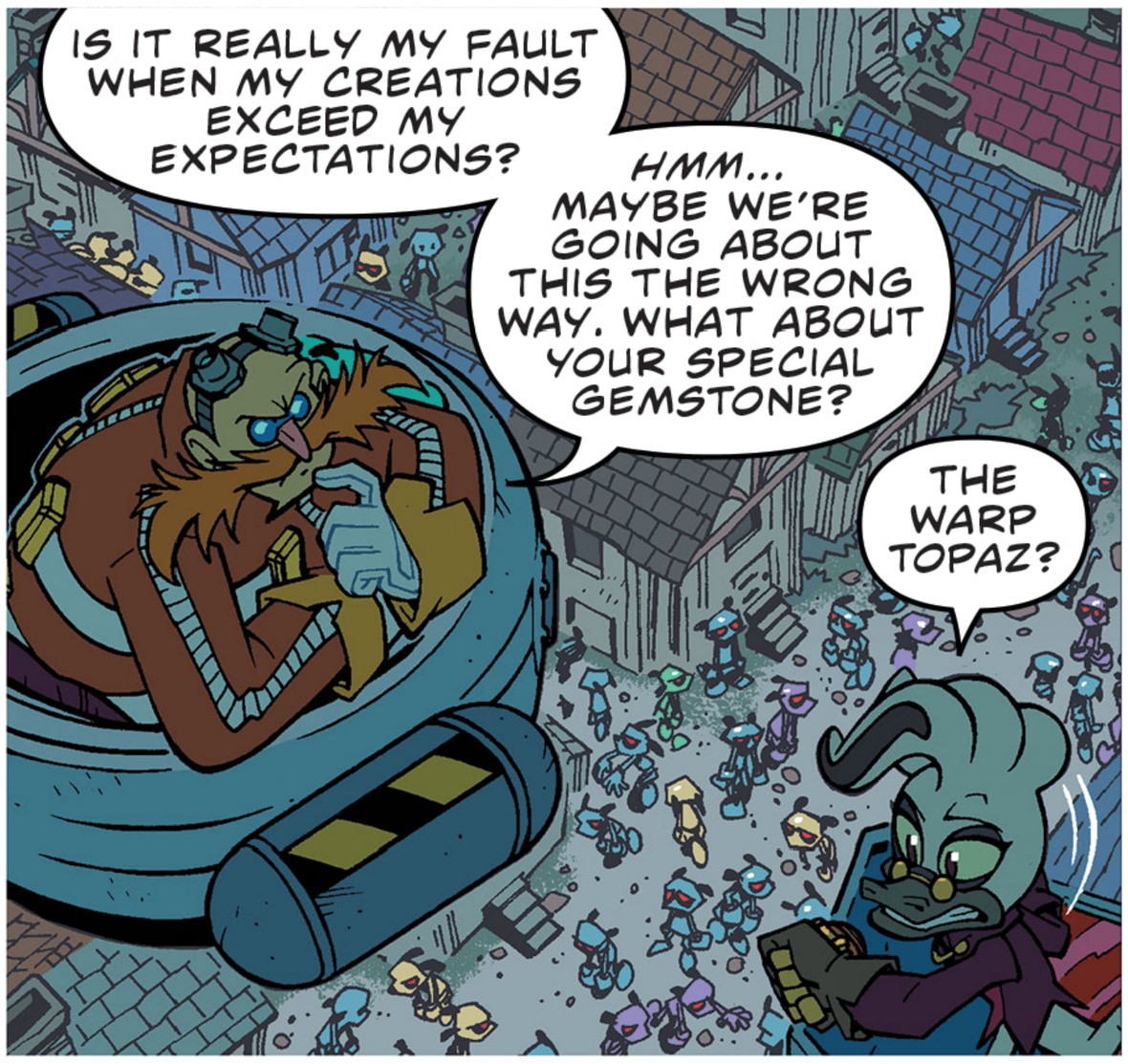
EGGMAN.

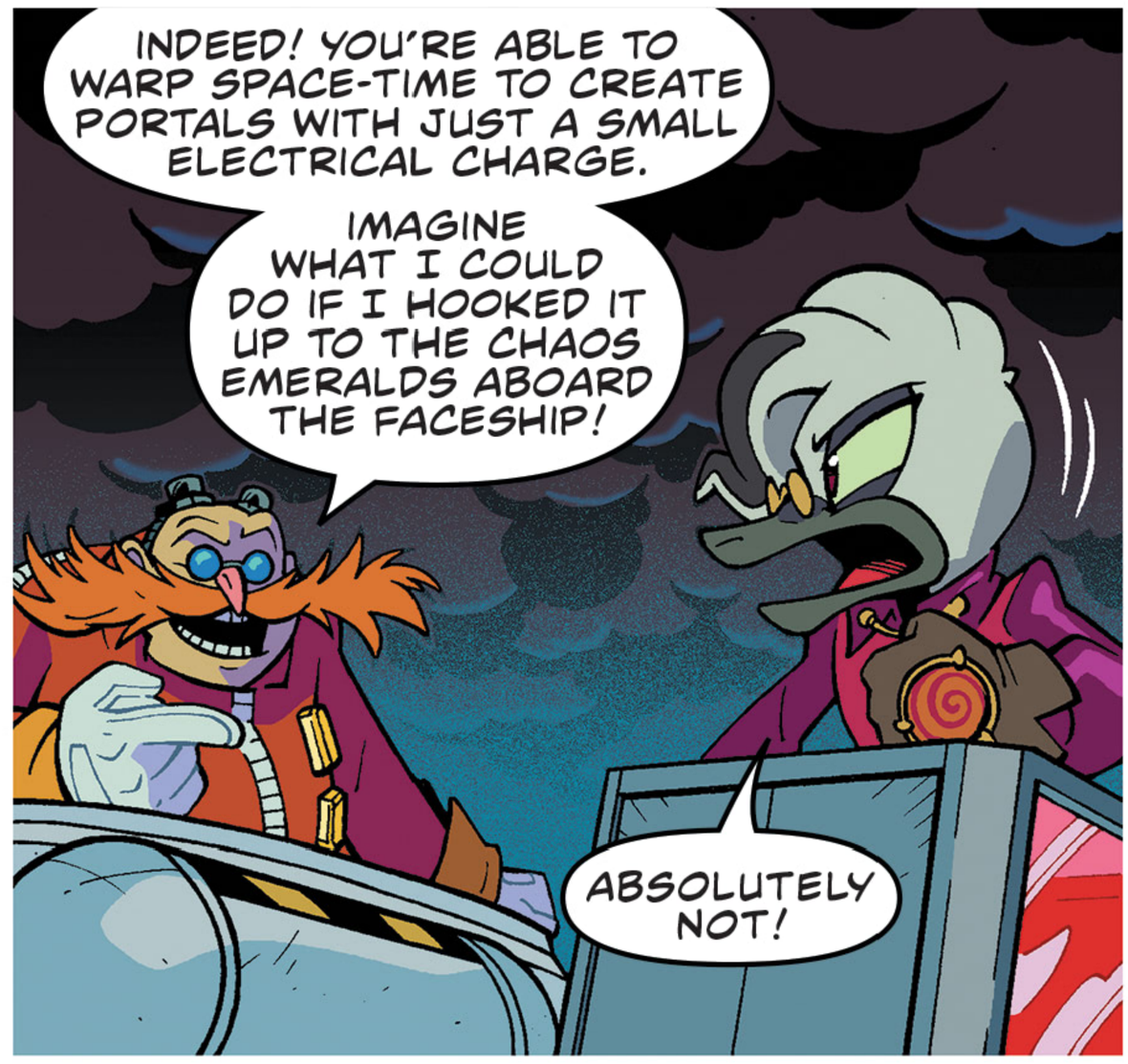

NOW TRYING FREQUENCY 141.12.
UGH... ZOMBOTS. THIS IS YOUR MASTER SPEAKING.
EVERYONE—OH, I DON'T KNOW—LOOK EAST.

NOW TRYING FREQUENCY 141.13.
ARGH! THIS IS SO TEDIOUS! I SHOULD'VE RIGGED AN AUTOMATED VERSION TO PLAY FROM THE FACESHIP!


WIDE-BAND BROADCASTS HAVE HAD NO EFFECT. WE AGREED A TIGHT-BAND, LOCALIZED ATTEMPT WAS THE BEST NEXT STEP.

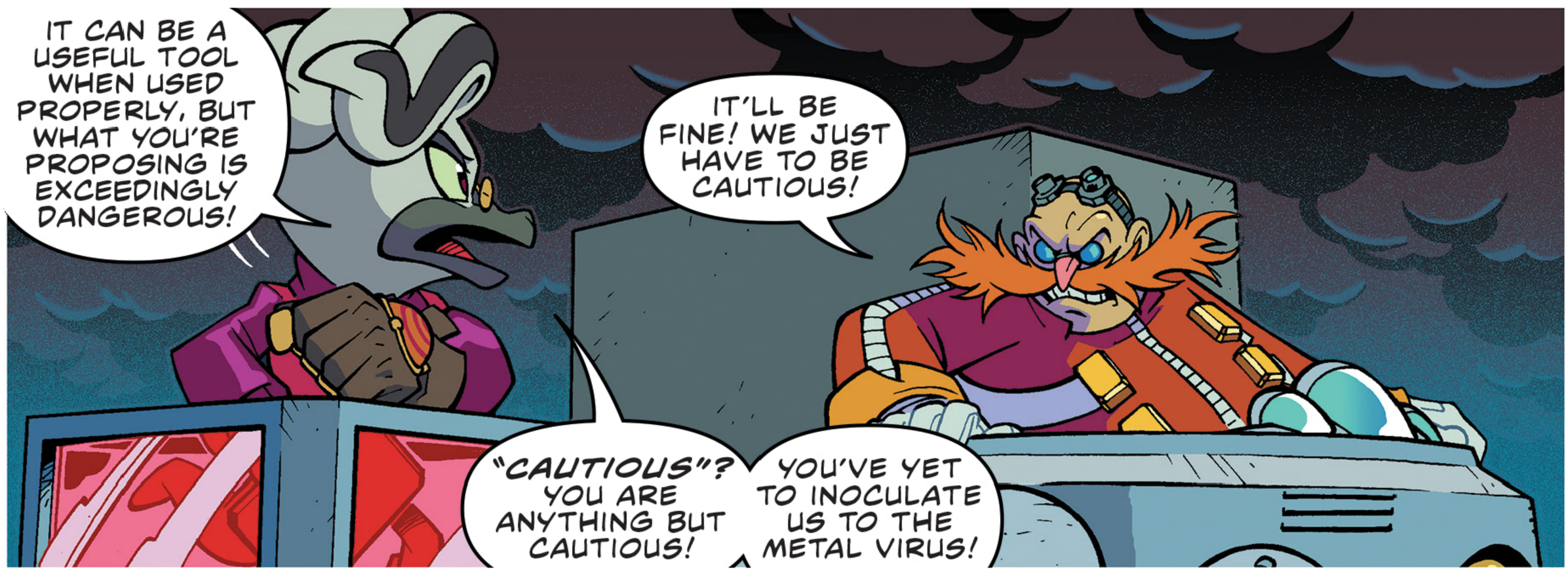

DON'T GET PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE WITH ME! IF YOU'RE GOING TO RIDE MY COATTAILS, THEN YOU BETTER HAVE MY BACK!
ALL I'M SAYING, SIR, IS THAT IN HINDSIGHT, IT WOULD'VE BEEN SMART TO HAVE A FAILSAFE FOR THE METAL VIRUS MUTATING BEYOND YOUR CONTROL.

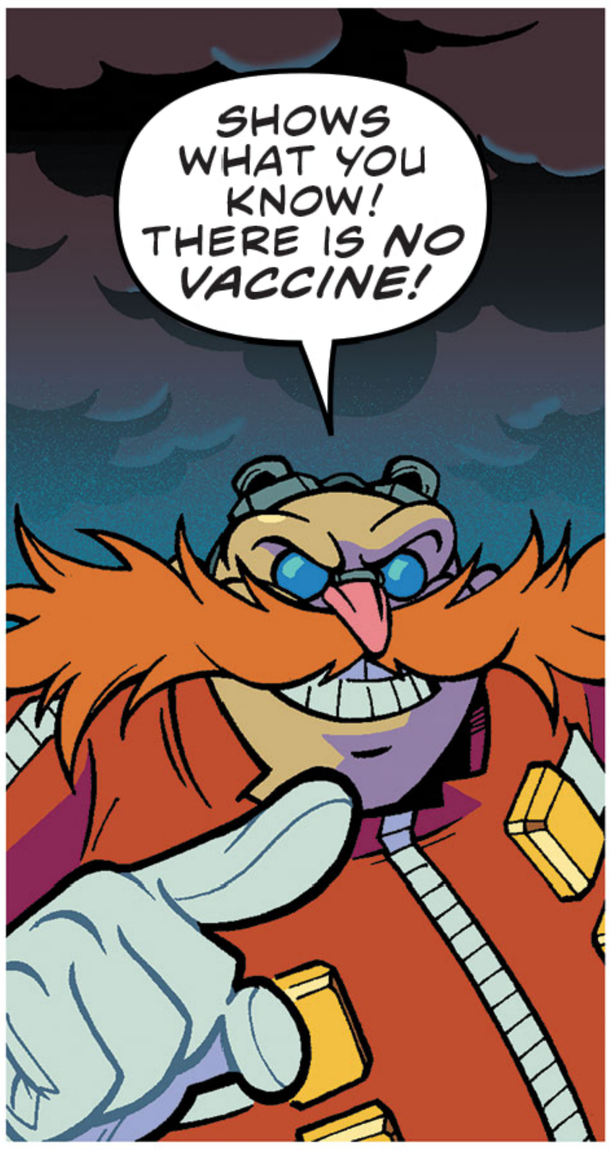




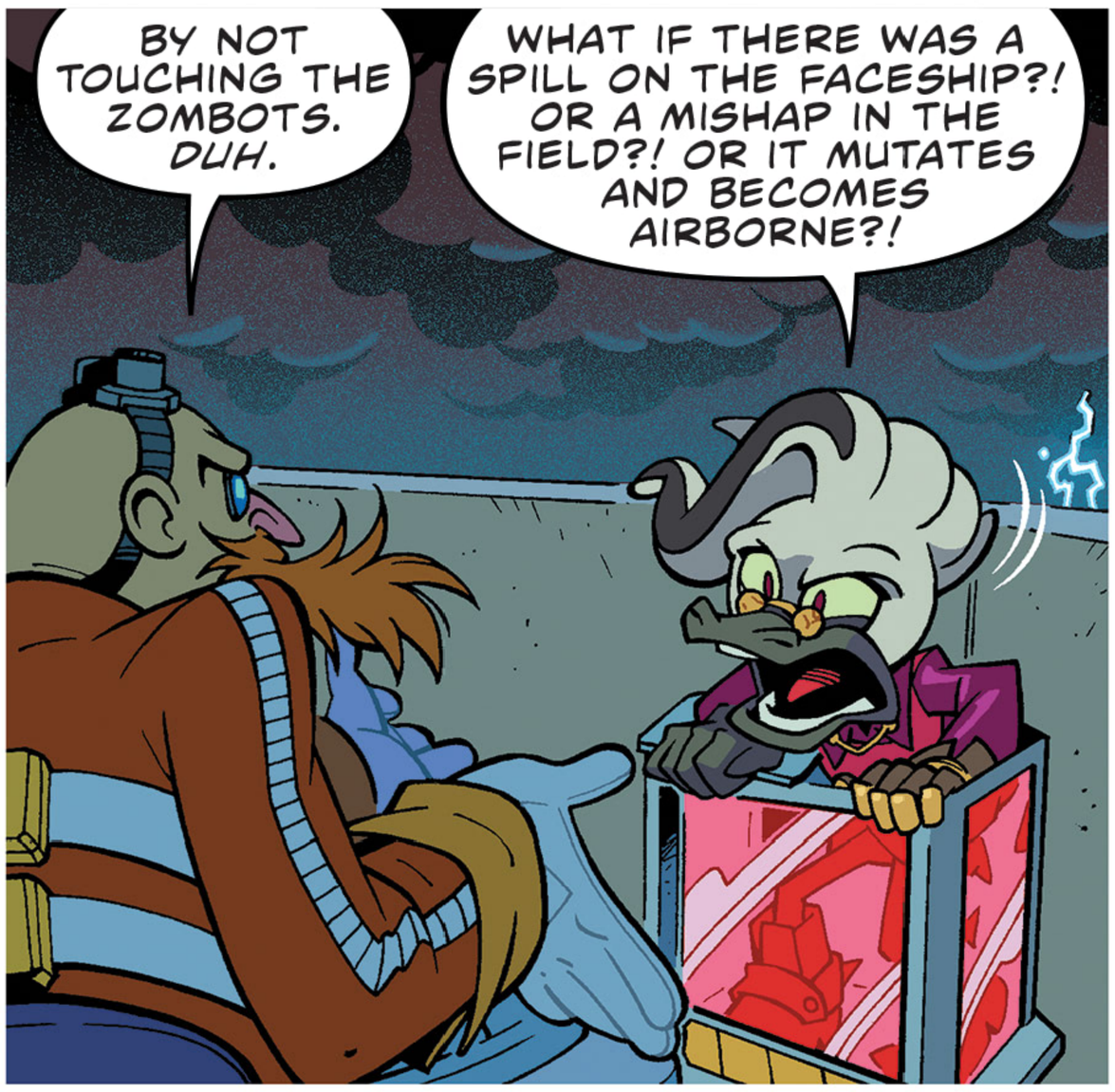
WHEN I FOUND IT, THE WARP TOPAZ RESPONDED STRONGLY TO EVEN THE MOST PASSIVE OF ENERGY WAVES!

IN MY EARLY EXPERIMENTS, ANYTHING ABOVE A LIGHT, CONTROLLED CHARGE RESULTED IN EXTREME REALITY ALTERATION.

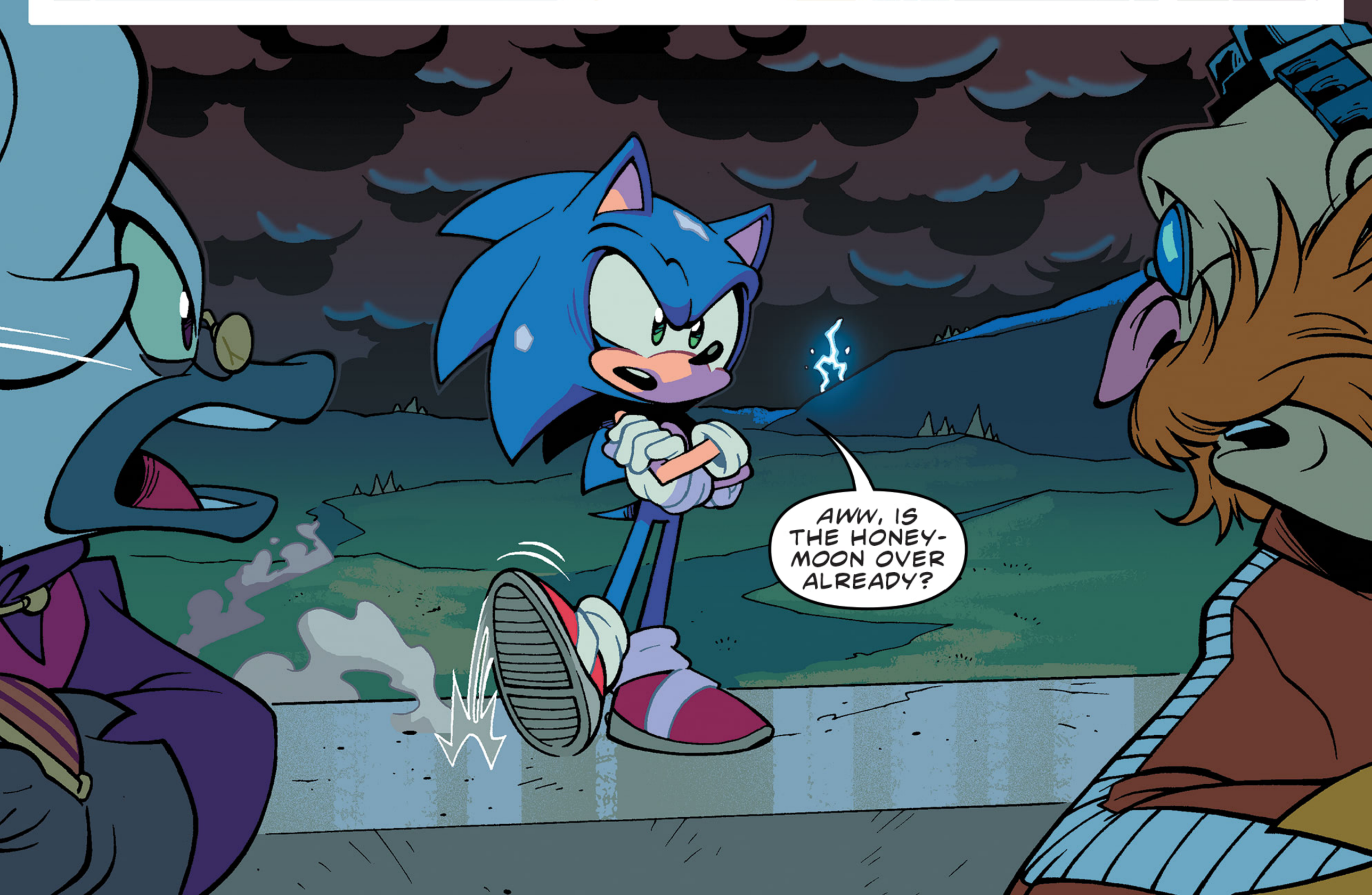


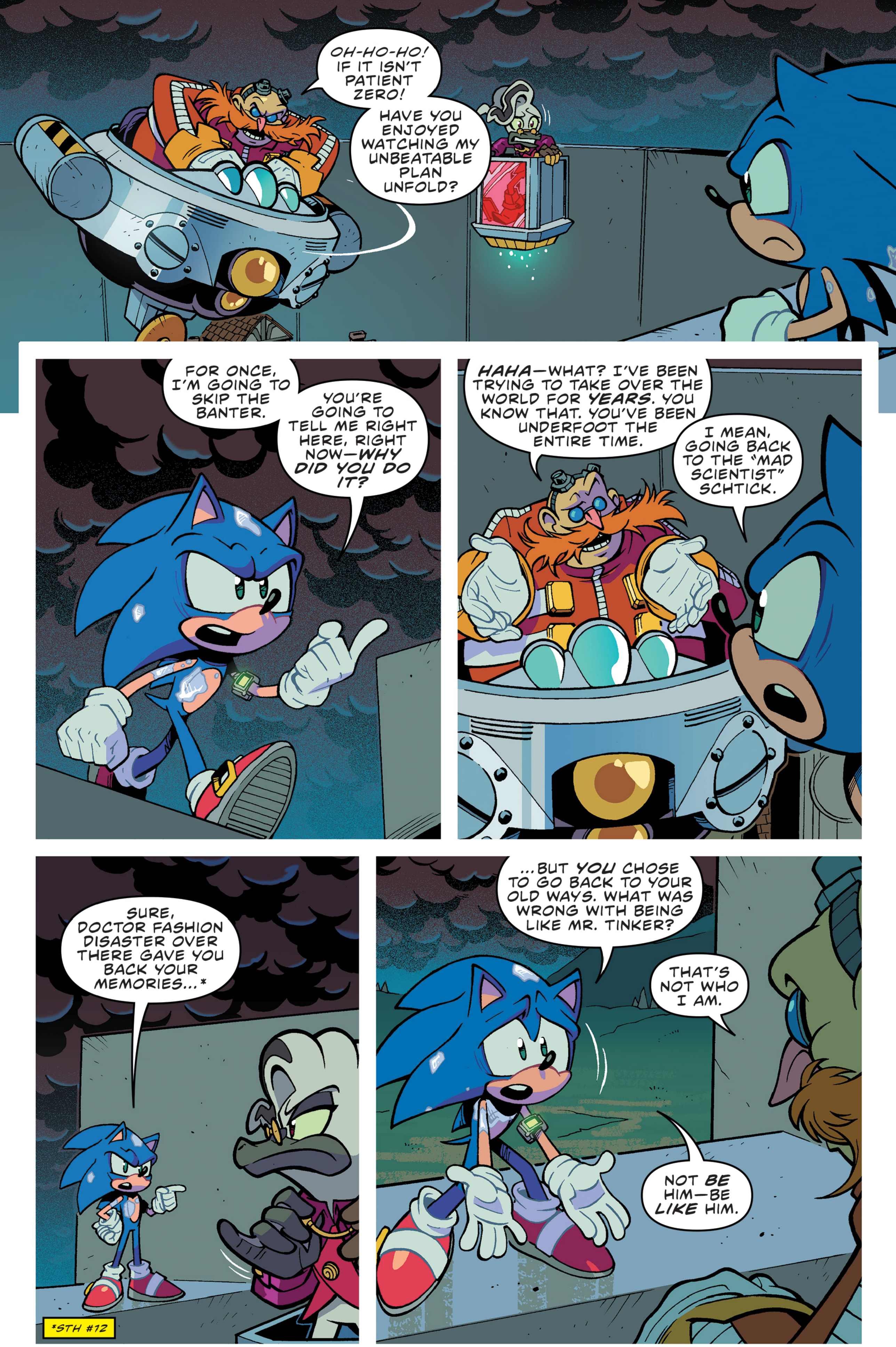

SHOWS WHAT YOU KNOW! THERE IS NO VACCINE!

THEN... BUT... HOW WERE YOU GOING TO PROTECT US FROM INFECTION?

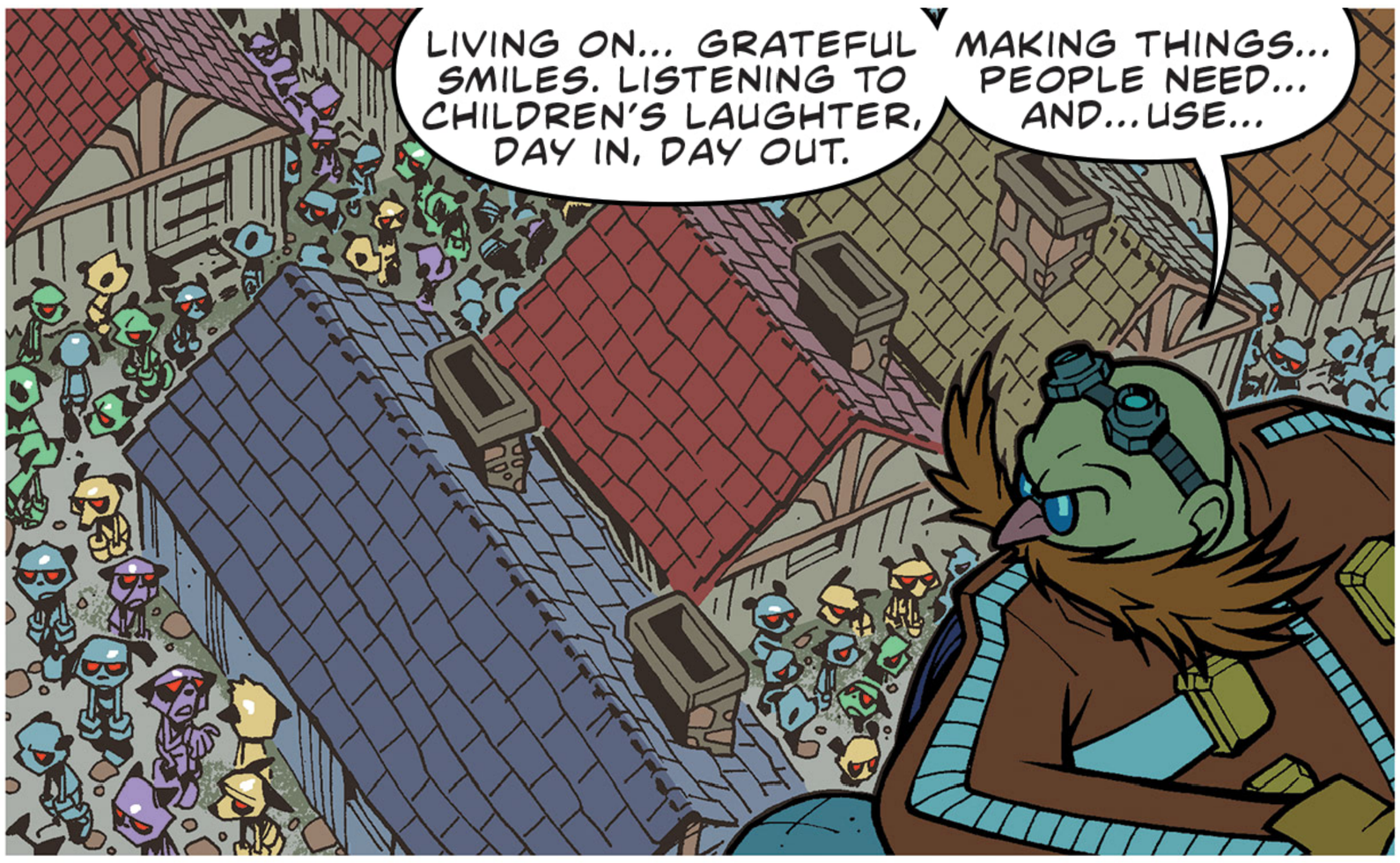

BY NOT TOUCHING THE ZOMBOTS. DUH.
WHAT IF THERE WAS A SPILL ON THE FACESHIP?! OR A MISHAP IN THE FIELD?! OR IT MUTATES AND BECOMES AIRBORNE?!

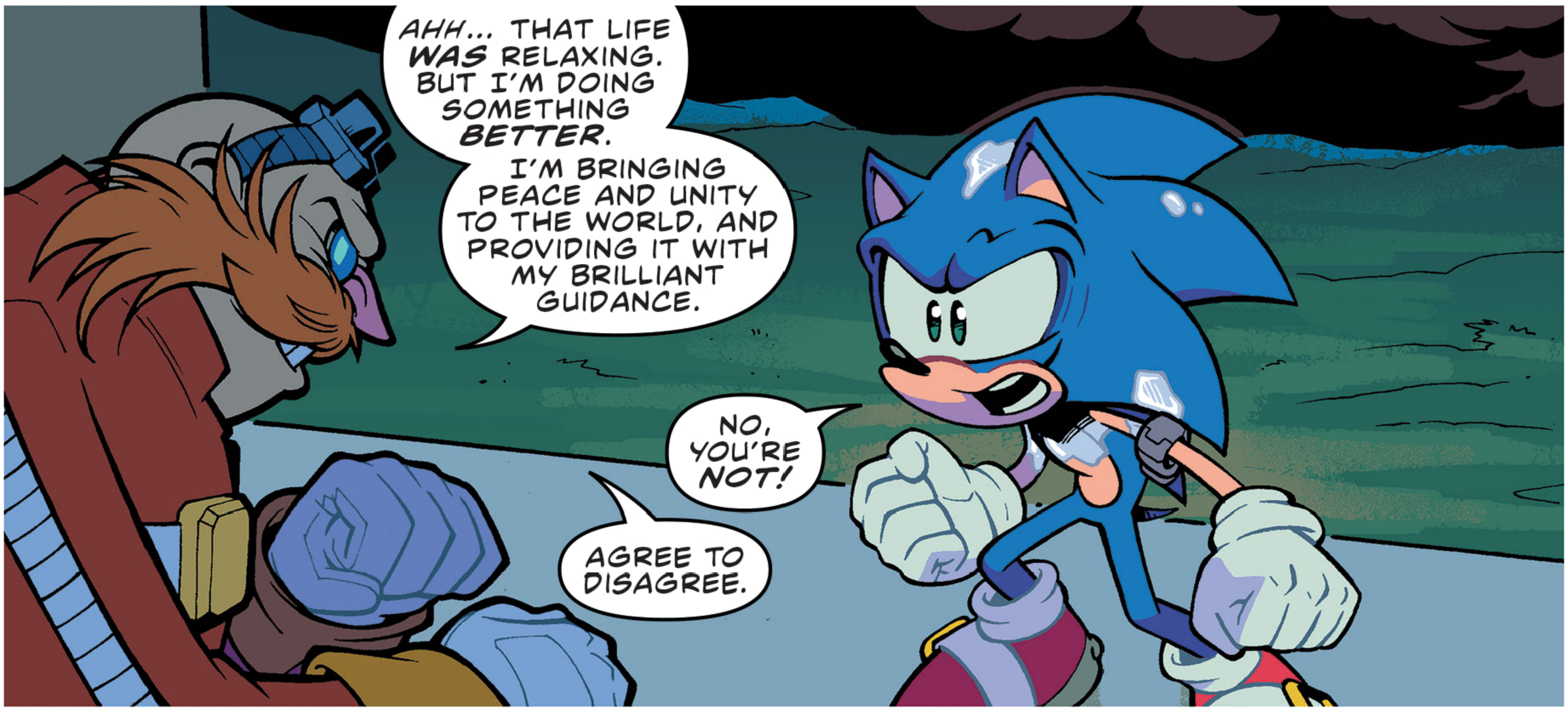
YOU'VE EXCEEDED MY THRESHOLD FOR NITPICKING, DOCTOR.
IT'S NOT NITPICKING! IT'S COMMON SENSE!
YOU'LL SHUT YOUR BILL, OR I'LL STAPLE IT SHUT!

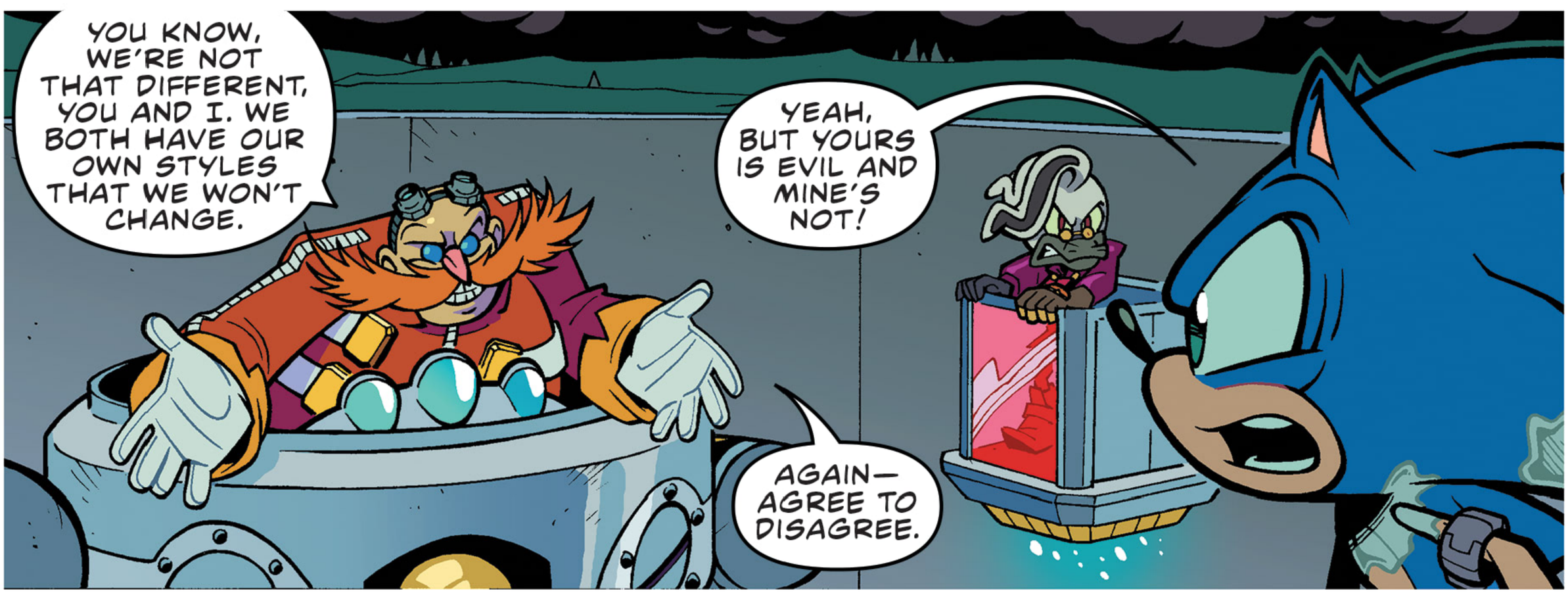

AWW, IS THE HONEY-MOON OVER ALREADY?


OH-HO-HO! IF IT ISN'T PATIENT ZERO!
HAVE YOU ENJOYED WATCHING MY UNBEATABLE PLAN UNFOLD?
FOR ONCE, I'M GOING TO SKIP THE BANTER.
YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW—WHY DID YOU DO IT?
HAHA—WHAT? I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD FOR YEARS. YOU KNOW THAT. YOU'VE BEEN UNDERFOOT THE ENTIRE TIME.
I MEAN, GOING BACK TO THE "MAD SCIENTIST" SCHTICK.
SURE, DOCTOR FASHION DISASTER OVER THERE GAVE YOU BACK YOUR MEMORIES...*
*STH #12
...BUT YOU CHOSE TO GO BACK TO YOUR OLD WAYS. WHAT WAS WRONG WITH BEING LIKE MR. TINKER?
THAT'S NOT WHO I AM.
NOT BE HIM—BE LIKE HIM.

OH, WHAT? YOU WANT ME TO BE A CHARITABLE GOODY TWO-SHOES? FIXING DOORKNOBS AND BUILDING TOYS?

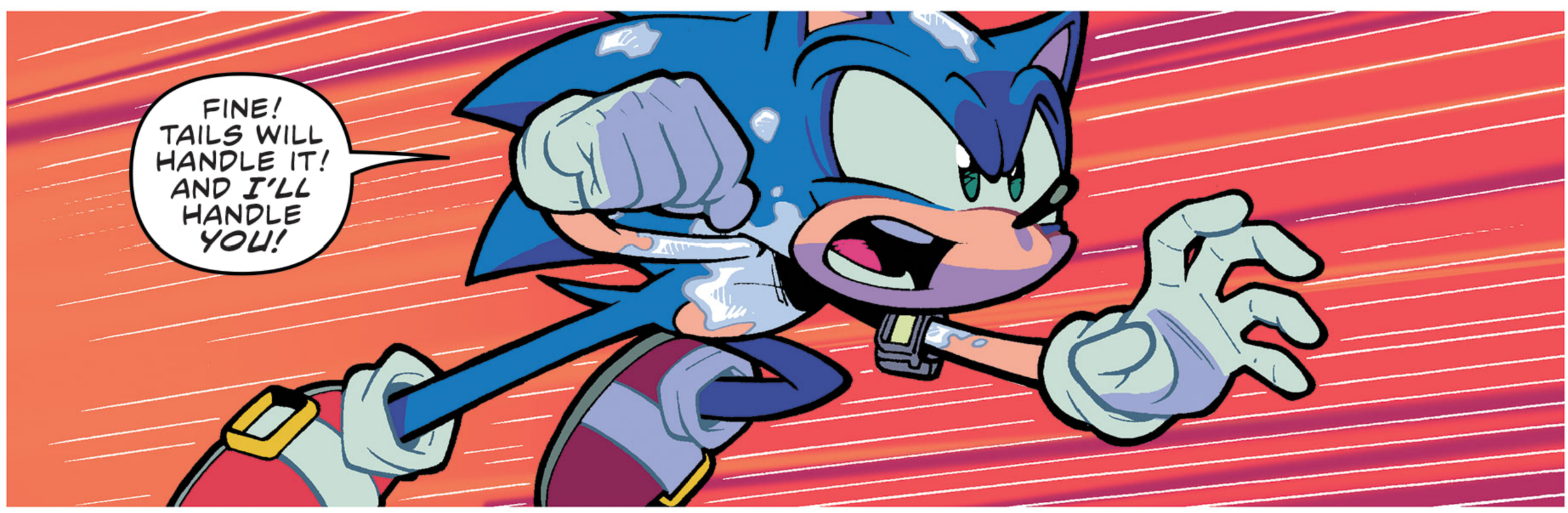

LIVING ON... GRATEFUL SMILES. LISTENING TO CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER, DAY IN, DAY OUT.
MAKING THINGS... PEOPLE NEED... AND...USE...

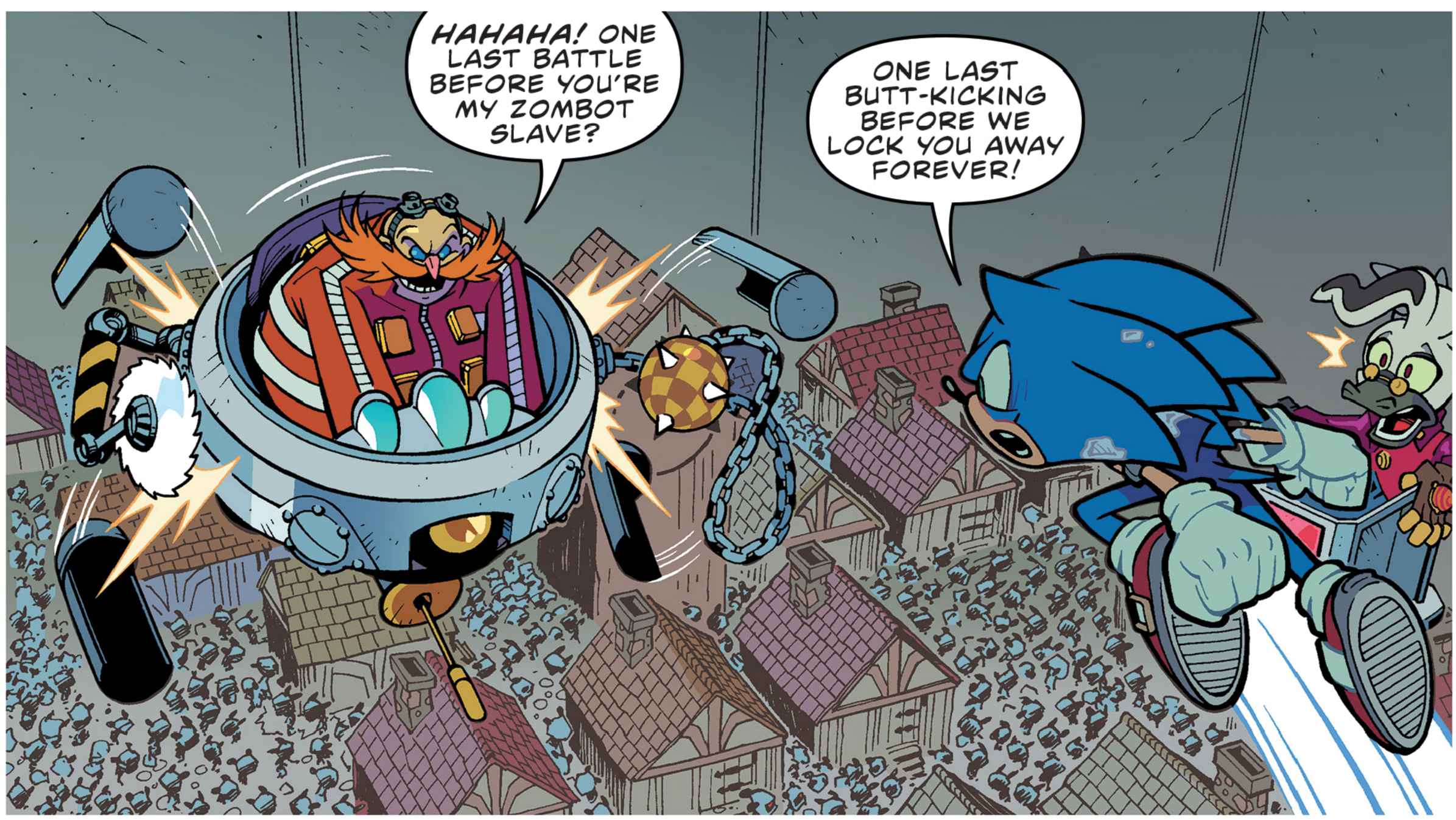

AHH... THAT LIFE WAS RELAXING. BUT I'M DOING SOMETHING BETTER.
I'M BRINGING PEACE AND UNITY TO THE WORLD, AND PROVIDING IT WITH MY BRILLIANT GUIDANCE.
NO, YOU'RE NOT!
AGREE TO DISAGREE.


YOU KNOW, WE'RE NOT THAT DIFFERENT, YOU AND I. WE BOTH HAVE OUR OWN STYLES THAT WE WON'T CHANGE.
YEAH, BUT YOURS IS EVIL AND MINE'S NOT!
AGAIN— AGREE TO DISAGREE.

NNGH... I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME... AND I'M TOTALLY OUT OF PATIENCE...
YOU'RE GOING TO REVERSE THE METAL VIRUS OR ELSE—

"OR ELSE" WHAT? YOU CAN'T STOP ME! NO ONE CAN!
THE METAL VIRUS'S INFECTION HAS SPREAD EXPONENTIALLY! I COULDN'T STOP IT NOW EVEN IF I WANTED TO!
ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO FIND A WAY TO COMMAND THE ZOMBOTS, AND THEN I WILL FINALLY RULE THE WORLD!

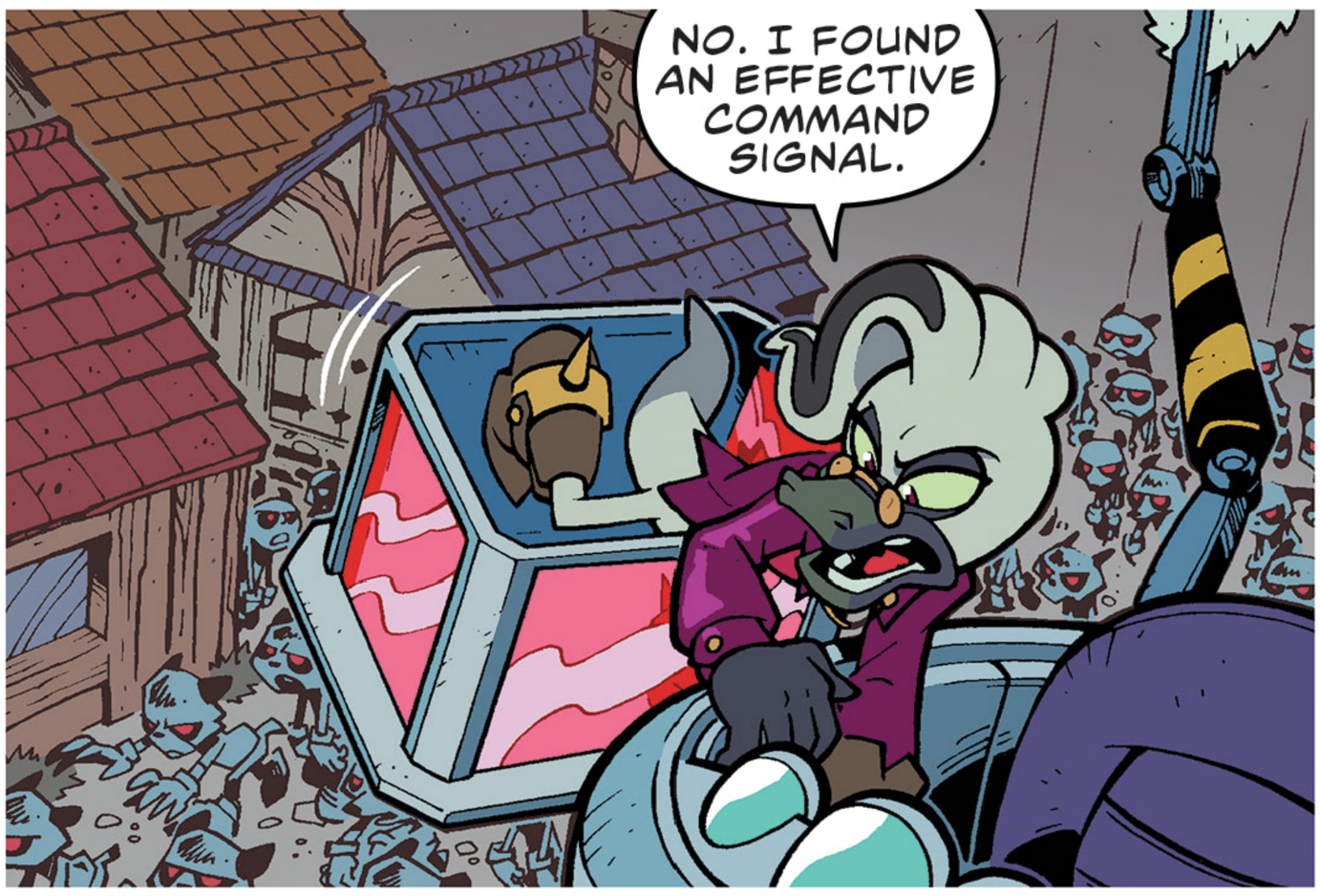

FINE! TAILS WILL HANDLE IT! AND I'LL HANDLE YOU!


HAHAHA! ONE LAST BATTLE BEFORE YOU'RE MY ZOMBOT SLAVE?
ONE LAST BUTT-KICKING BEFORE WE LOCK YOU AWAY FOREVER!

HERE IT IS. THE SCENE I'VE DREAMED OF SEEING FIRSTHAND.
AND ALL I FEEL IS... APATHY.
NEO METAL SONIC NEARLY SUCCEEDED IN REVIVING THE EGGMAN EMPIRE. BUT HE ACTED TOO BRASHLY.
HE THOUGHT OVERWHELMING POWER WOULD WIN THE DAY WITHOUT A PROPER PLAN.*
*STH #9-11
I THOUGHT IT WAS BECAUSE HE'D BEEN DESIGNED AS A COUNTER TO SONIC—A BALLISTIC MISSILE WITH A BUILT-IN GRUDGE.
BUT THE FIRST BIO-DATA HE DOWNLOADED WAS EGGMAN'S.** AND HERE WE ARE, SEEING THE EXACT SAME BRUTE-FORCE STRATEGY.
**STH #7
I GOT LOST IN THE PAGEANTRY—IN HIS SHOWMANSHIP.
I WAS INSPIRED BY EGGMAN'S LEGEND.
THE MAN SIMPLY DOESN'T MEASURE UP.
BRAK

YOU CAN'T RUN FOREVER, RODENT! YOU'LL TIRE EVENTUALLY, AND THEN MY VIRUS WILL TAKE HOLD!
IF YOU'RE SO PROUD OF IT, WHY DON'T YOU TRY IT!
GAK! DON'T TOUCH ME!
WHOA!
GYAH!
SURE WOULD BE NICE IF YOU HAD A CURE HANDY, HUH?
S-S-STAY BACK! I C-C-C-COMMAND YOU—!
THUD

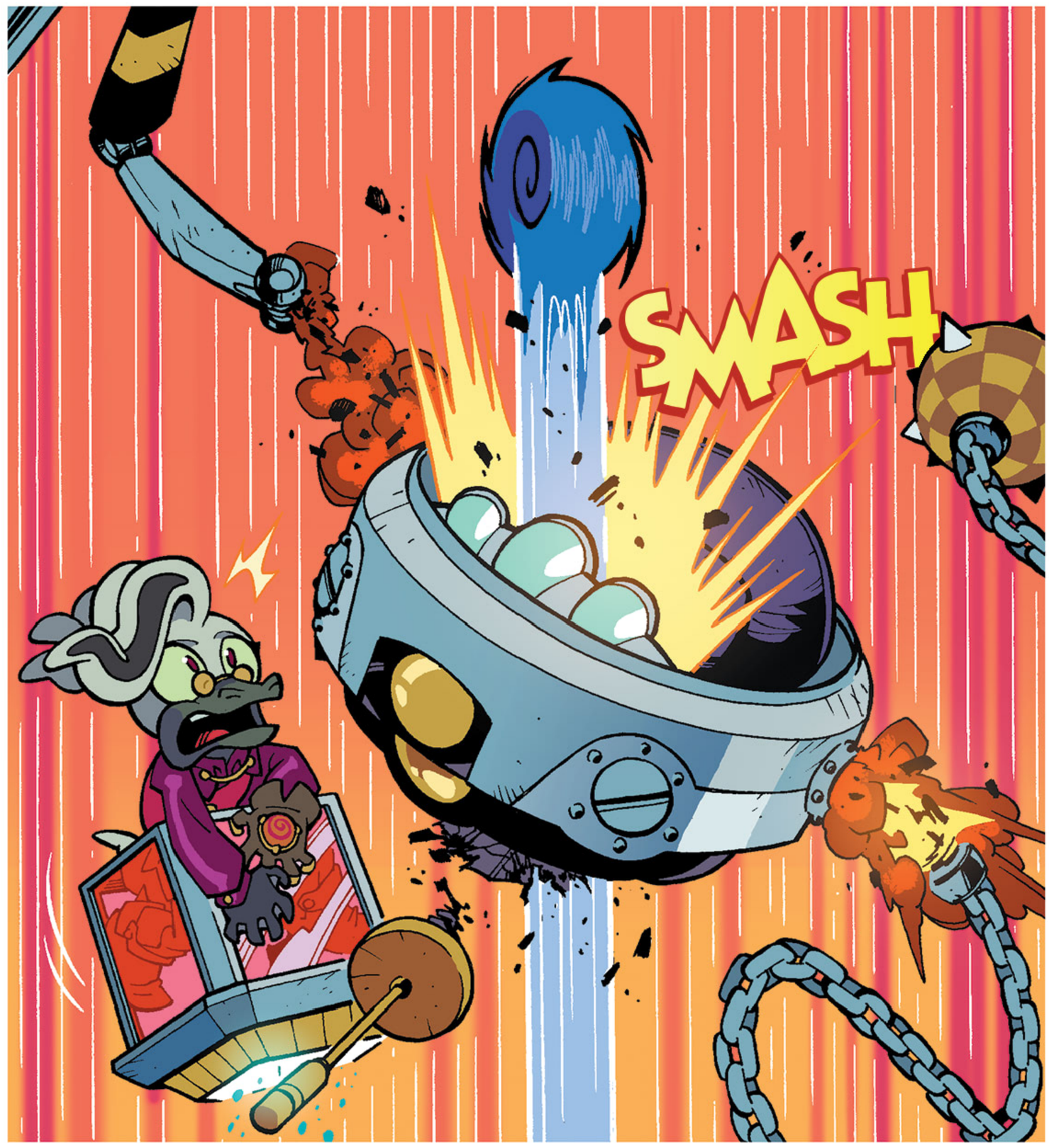
...THAT WORKED...?


NO. I FOUND AN EFFECTIVE COMMAND SIGNAL.

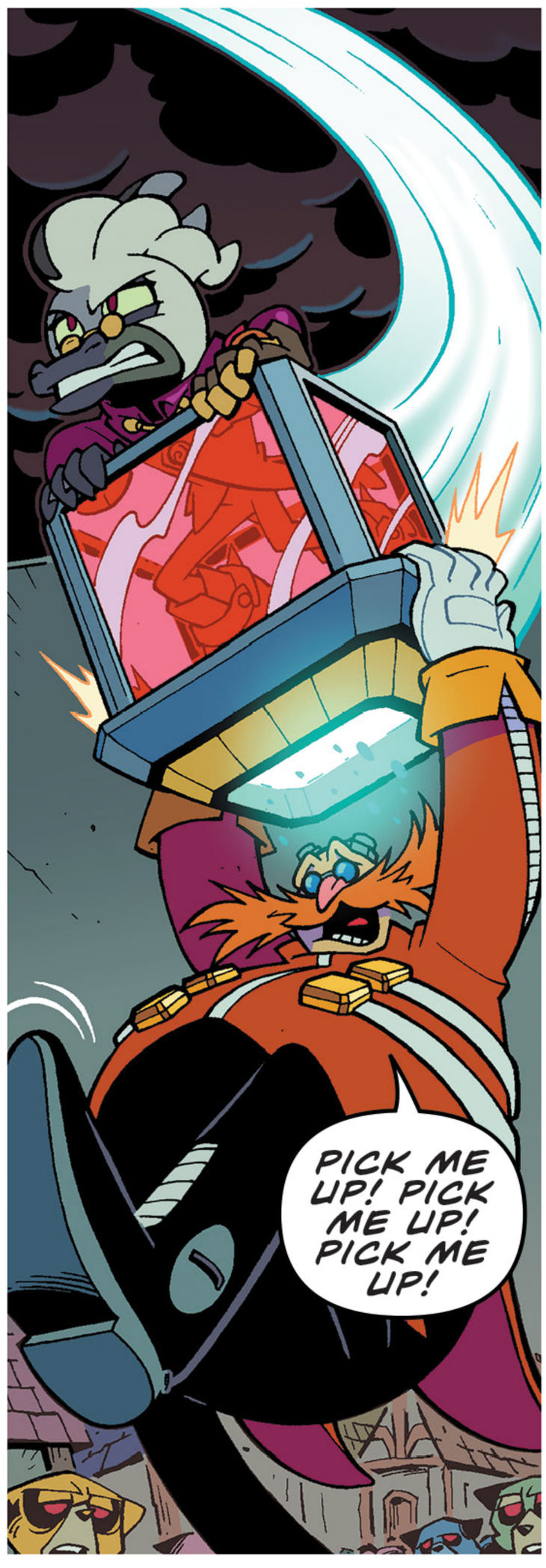
MAYBE I WON'T HAVE TO USE MY OWN PLANS AFTER ALL.
BUT THEN, WHAT WILL *YOU* LEARN FROM THIS?

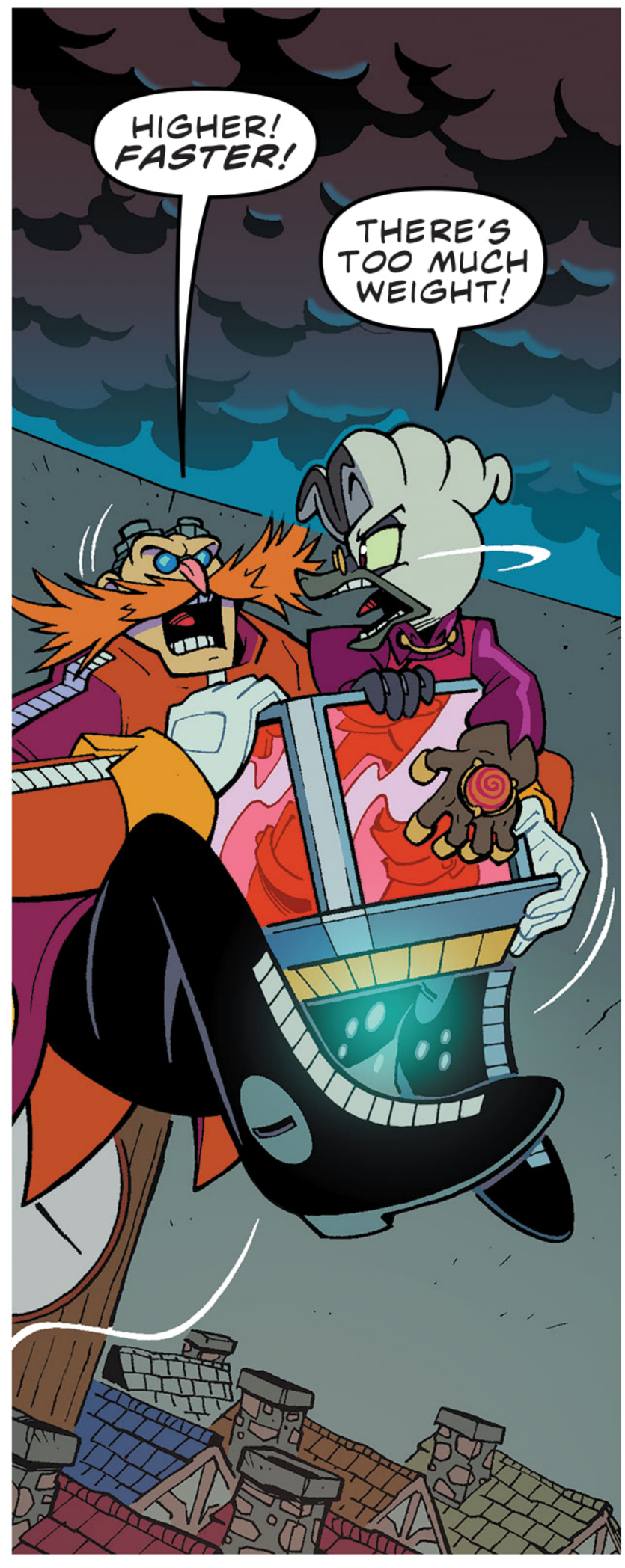
EXCELLENT WORK! NOW UPLOAD THAT FREQUENCY TO THE FACESHIP SO I CAN COMMAND THE ZOMBOTS OF THE WORLD!

NO!

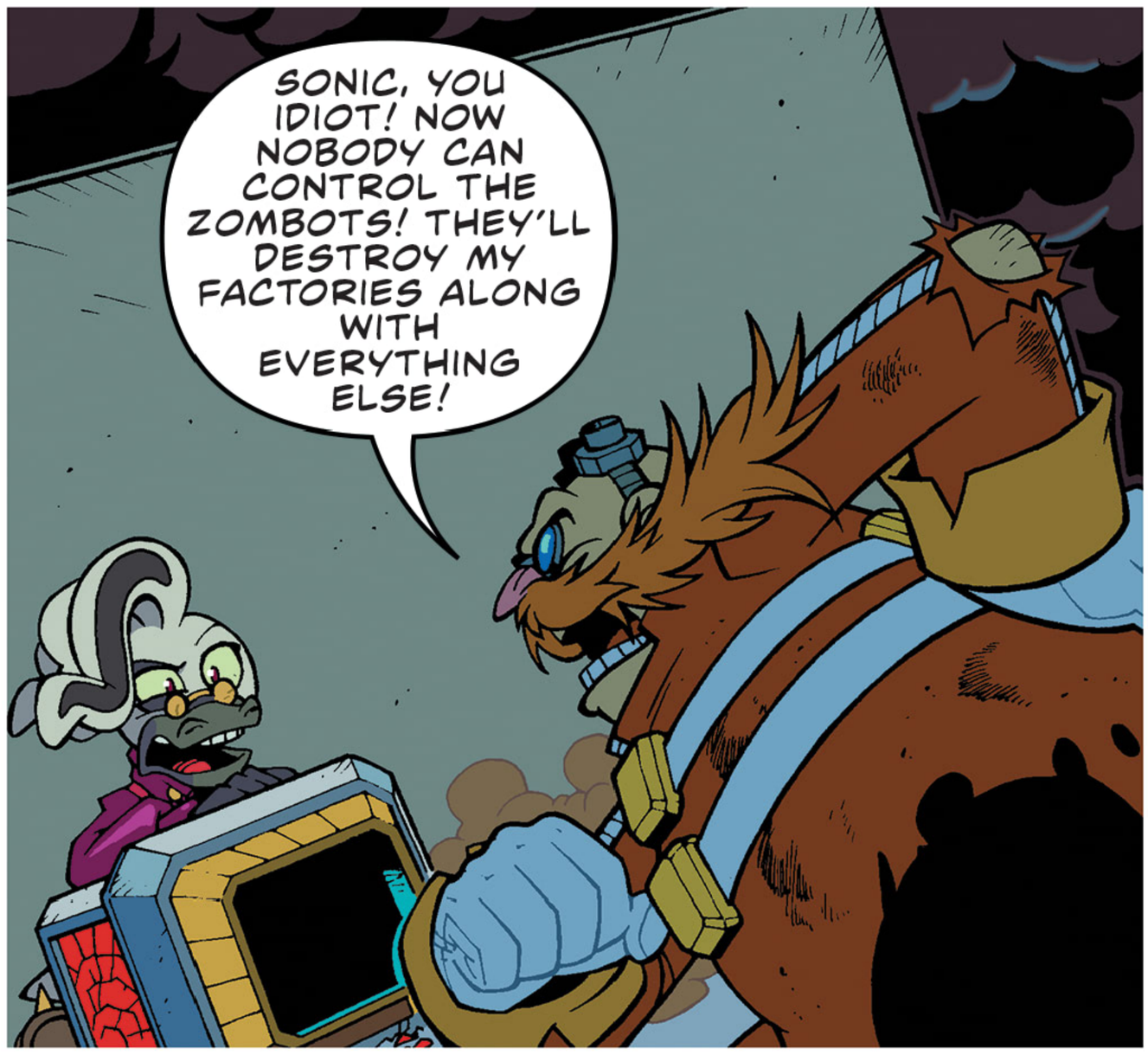

SMASH

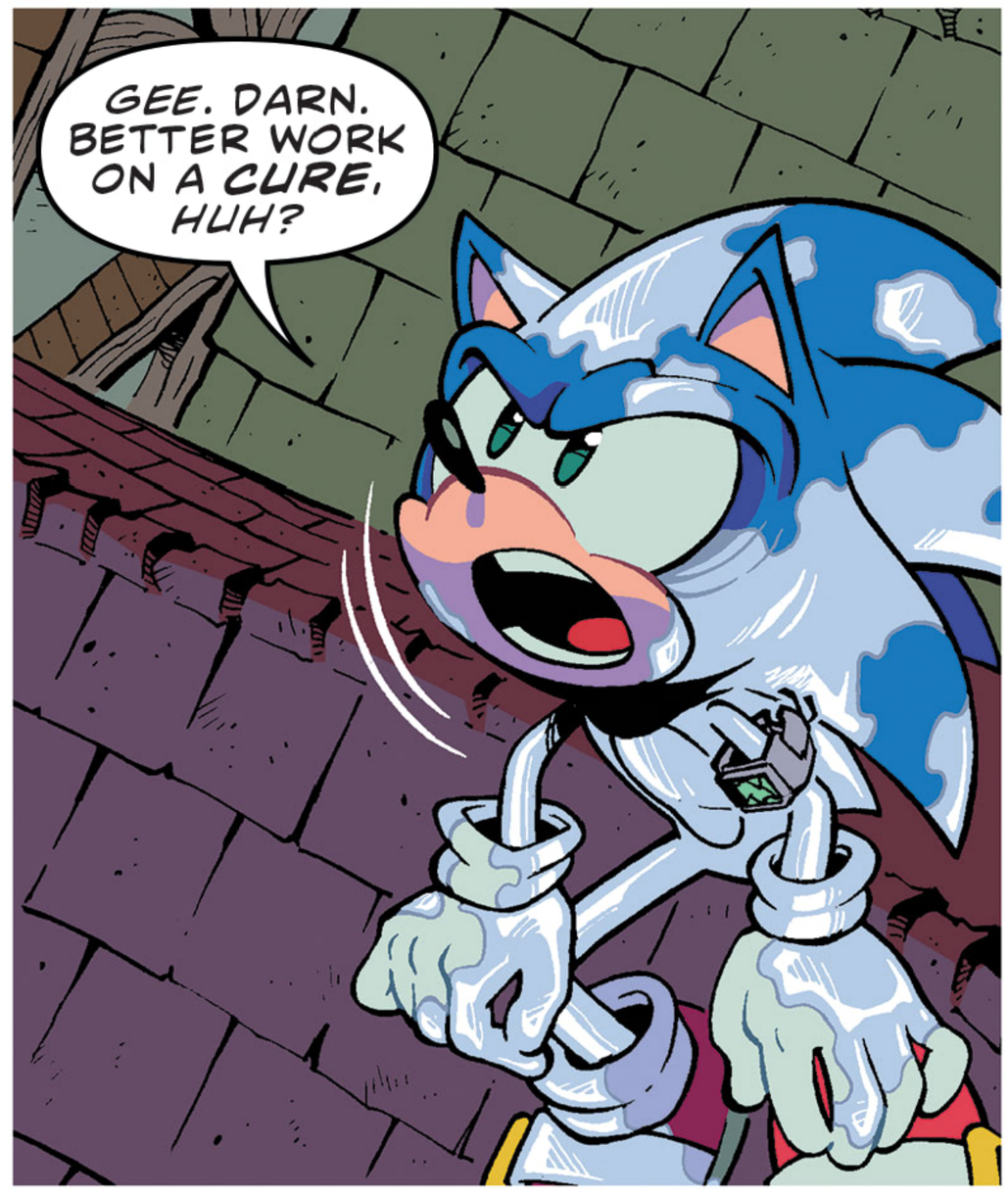
NO... ZOMBOT... ARMY... FOR YOU...
FZZZT


PICK ME UP! PICK ME UP! PICK ME UP!


HIGHER! FASTER!
THERE'S TOO MUCH WEIGHT!

CRASH

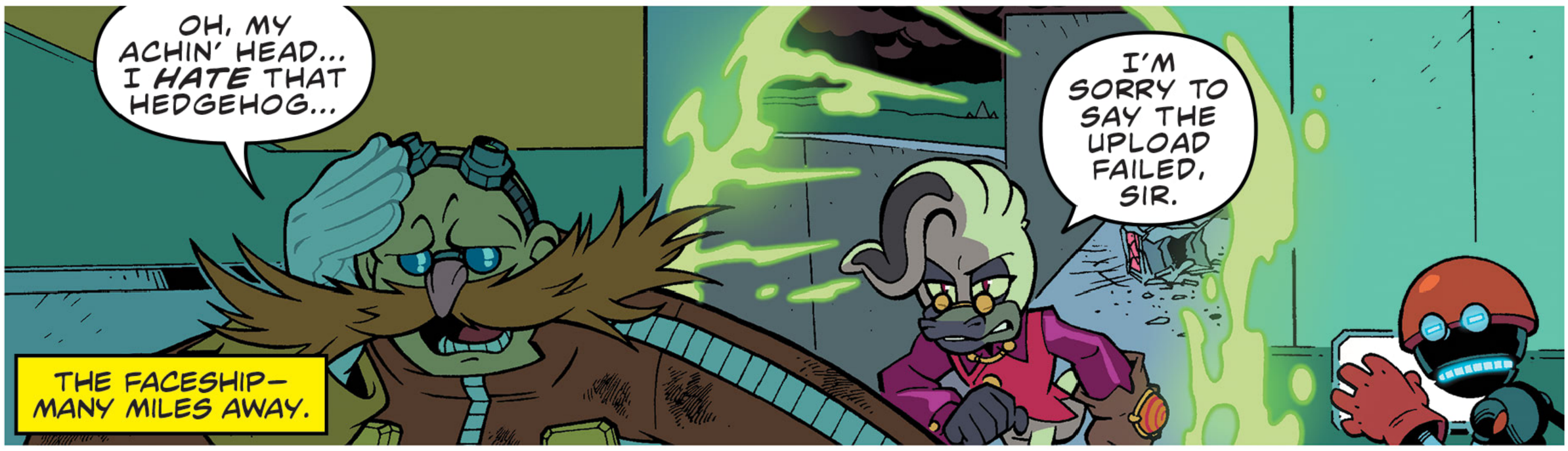

SONIC, YOU IDIOT! NOW NOBODY CAN CONTROL THE ZOMBOTS! THEY'LL DESTROY MY FACTORIES ALONG WITH EVERYTHING ELSE!

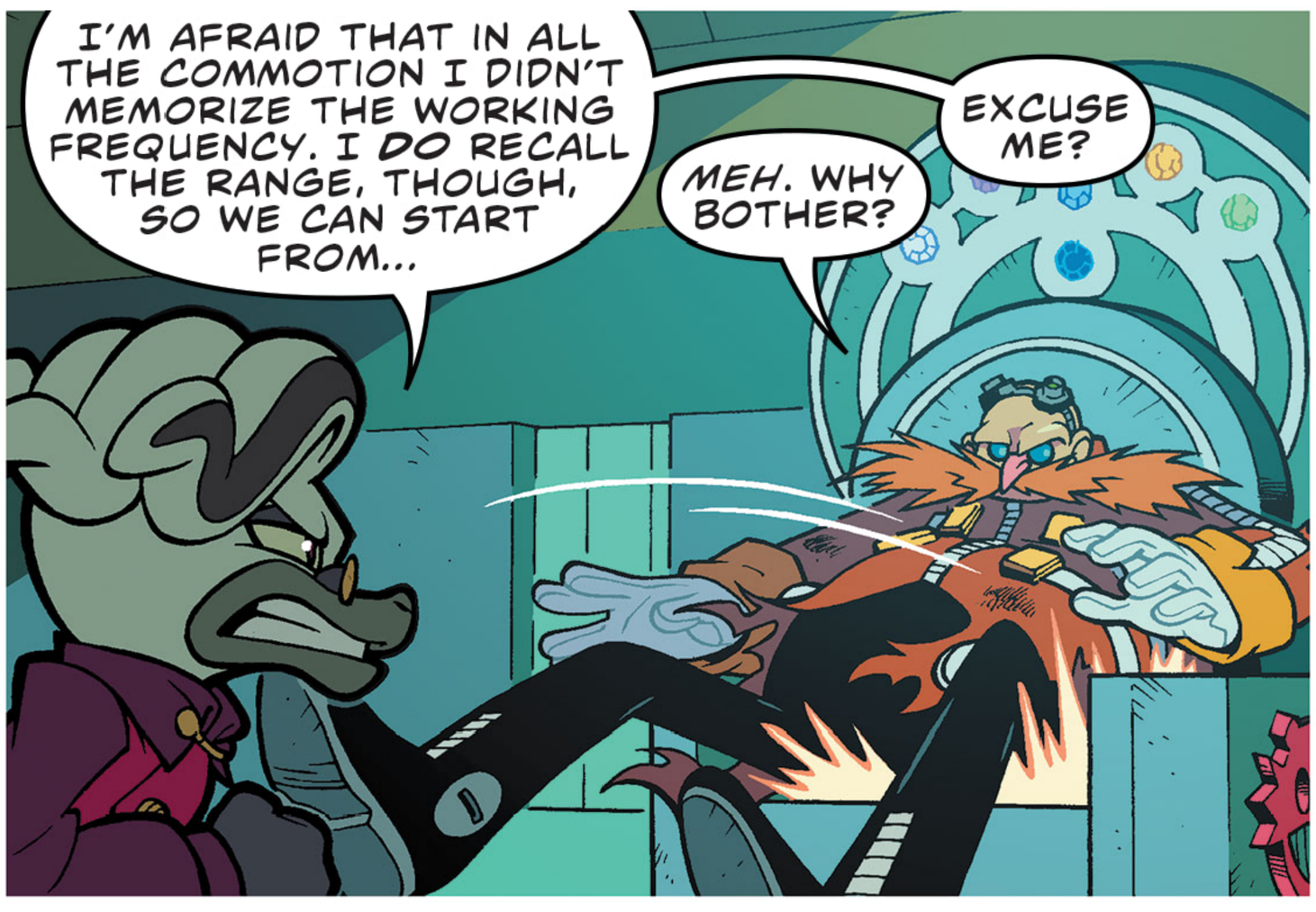

GEE. DARN. BETTER WORK ON A CURE, HUH?

NEVER! I'LL PAVE OVER THE HORDES IF I HAVE TO!
AS DUBIOUS AS THAT PLAN SOUNDS...

"...I SUGGEST WE TRY SOMETHING ELSE FIRST. LET'S RETREAT FOR NOW."

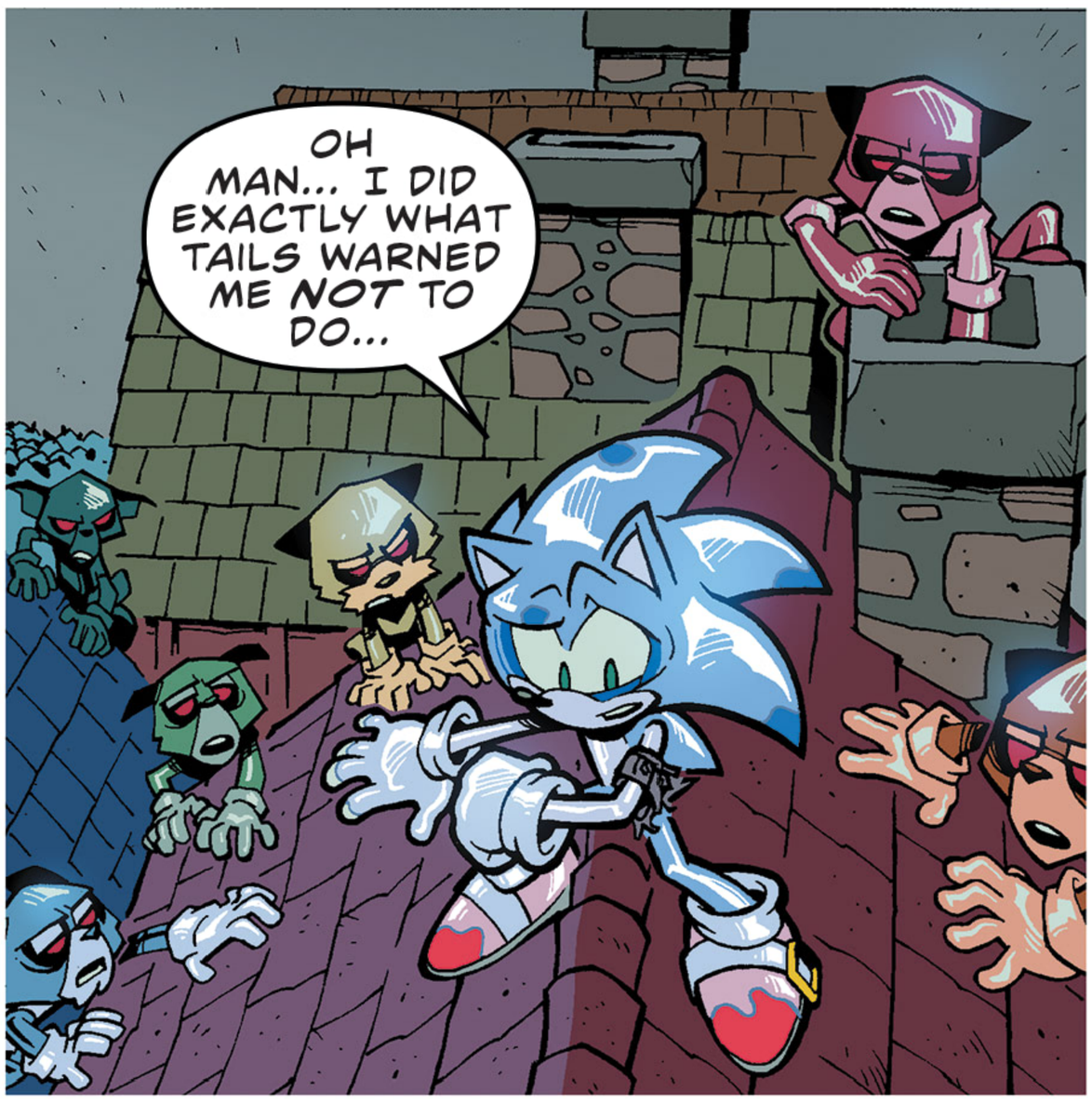
THIS IS A PYRRHIC VICTORY, SONIC! I'VE ALREADY WON THE WAR! YOU'RE JUST TOO STUBBORN TO ADMIT YOU'VE LOST!
VOIP


OH, MY ACHIN' HEAD... I HATE THAT HEDGEHOG...
THE FACESHIP— MANY MILES AWAY.
I'M SORRY TO SAY THE UPLOAD FAILED, SIR.

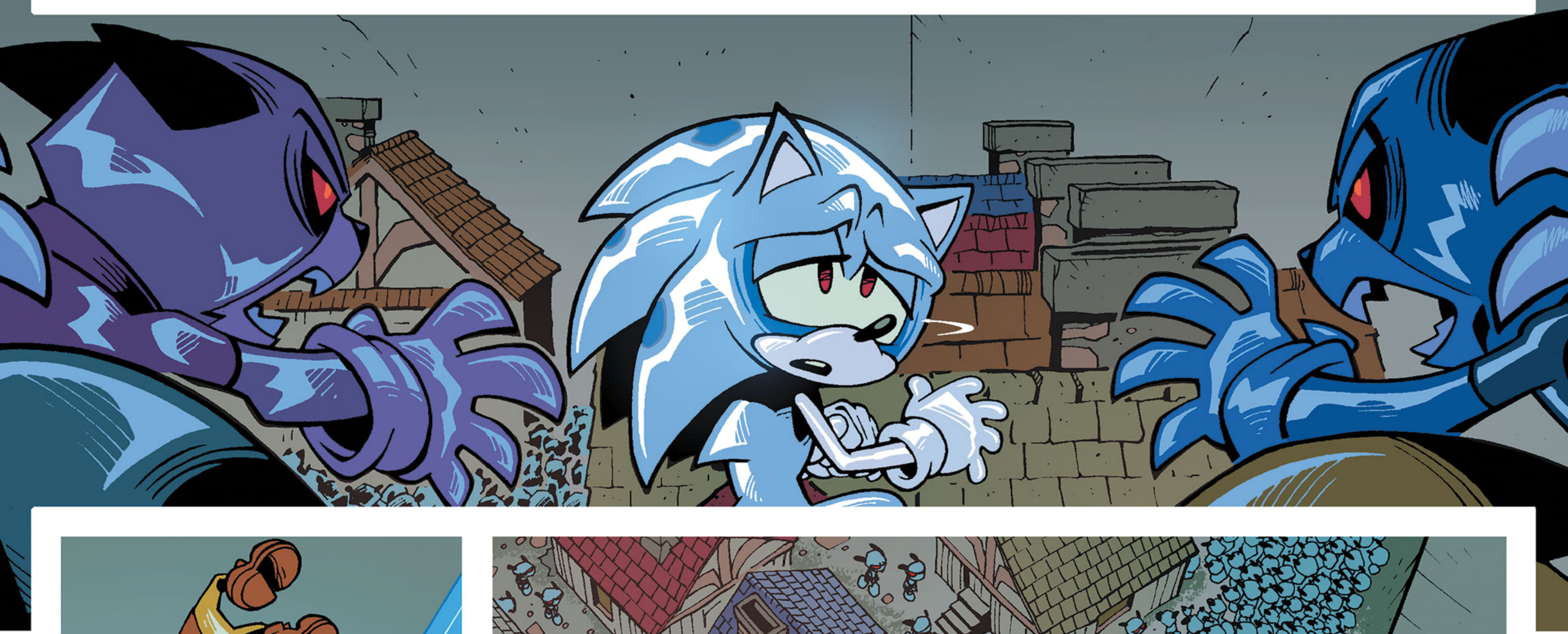

I'M AFRAID THAT IN ALL THE COMMOTION I DIDN'T MEMORIZE THE WORKING FREQUENCY. I DO RECALL THE RANGE, THOUGH, SO WE CAN START FROM...
MEH. WHY BOTHER?
EXCUSE ME?

IT'S TOO RISKY TO USE IT AT SO CLOSE A RANGE, AND BESIDES, THE METAL VIRUS IS MOST LIKELY ALREADY ADAPTING TO RESIST IT. I'M NOT GOING TO GO THROUGH THAT TEDIUM AGAIN JUST FOR IT TO NOT WORK.

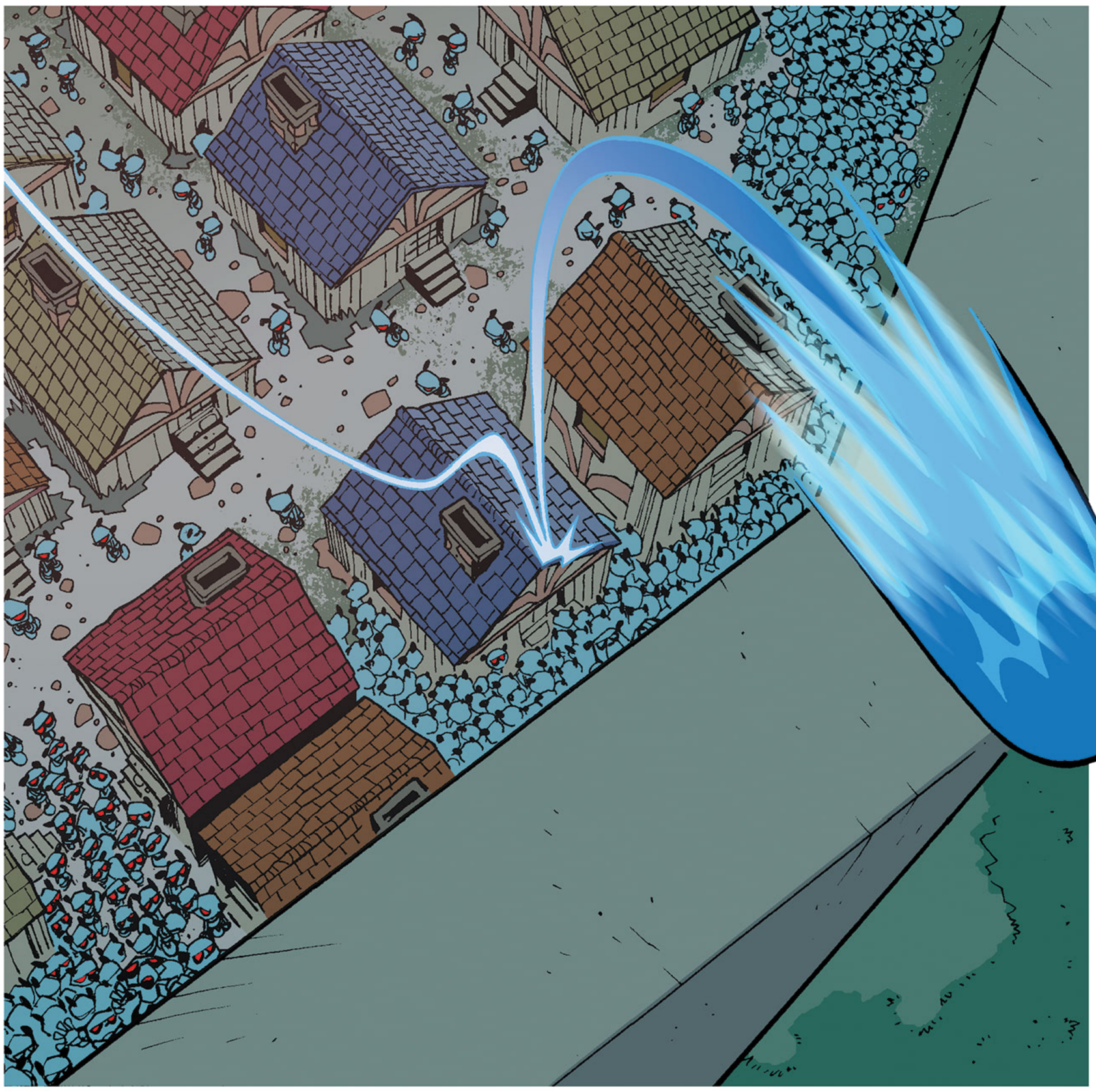
THEN WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?
FIRST? I ENJOY INFECTING... WHEREVER WE ARE. ORBOT?
SPIRAL HILL VILLAGE, SIR. THE METAL VIRUS HAS ALREADY BEEN DEPLOYED.
EXCELLENT. AFTER THAT... I DON'T KNOW. I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING.

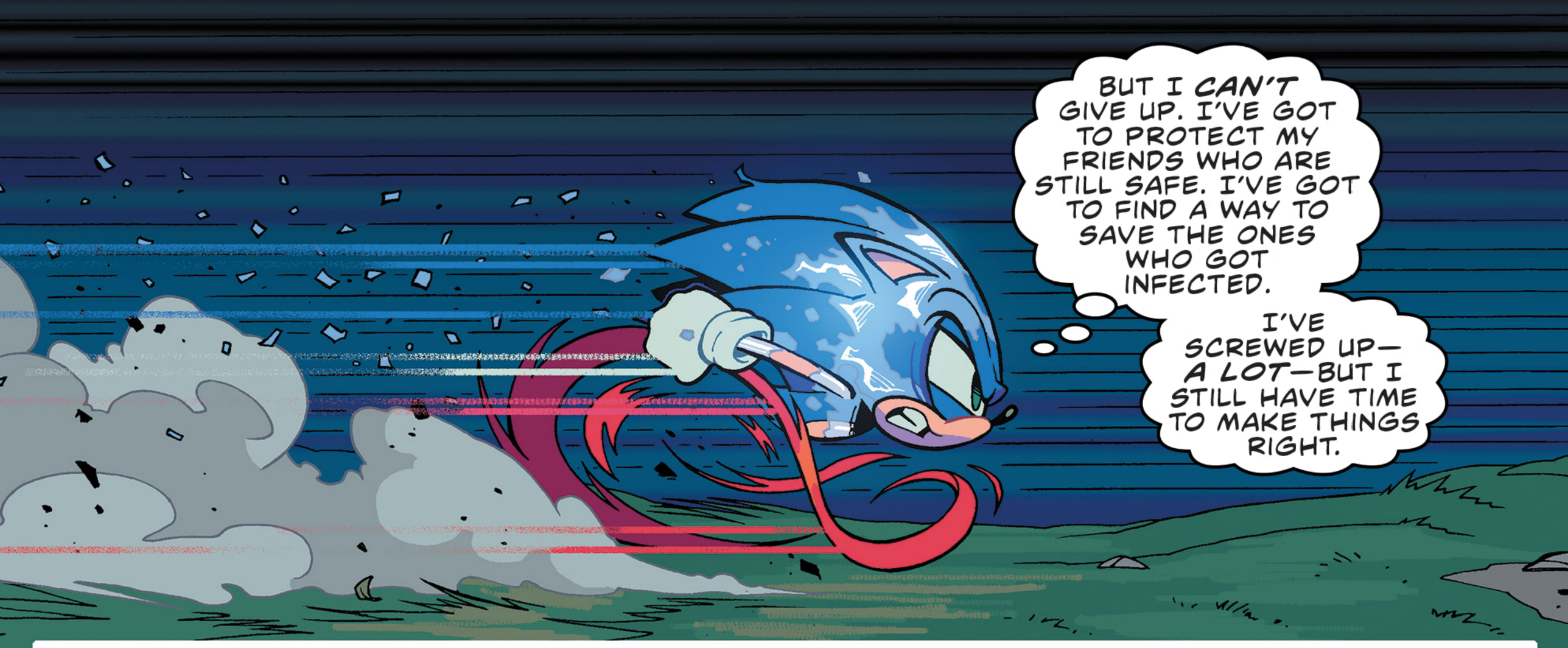

OH MAN... I DID EXACTLY WHAT TAILS WARNED ME *NOT* TO DO...

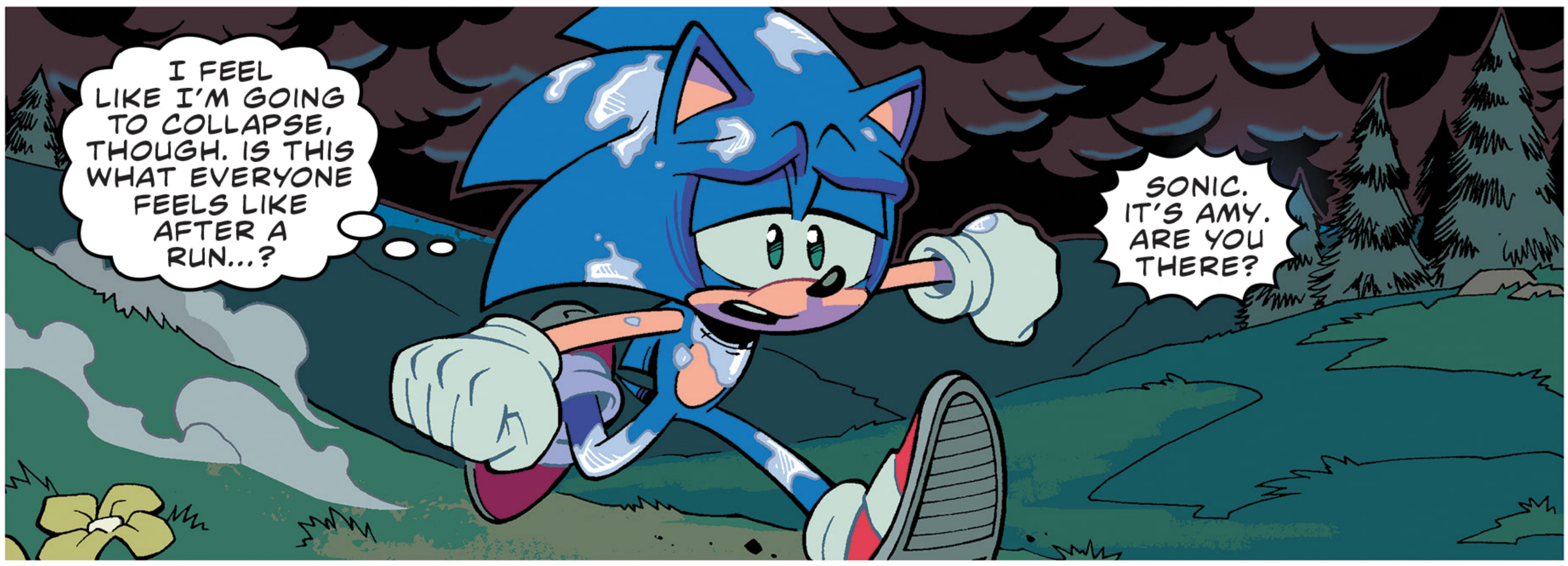
I DIDN'T PROTECT THE DATA-READER. I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO PROTECT MY FRIENDS.
I PUT MY FAITH IN THE IDEA EVERYONE HAS A *LITTLE* GOOD IN THEM, AND EGGMAN'S MADE ME PAY FOR IT EVERY DAY...

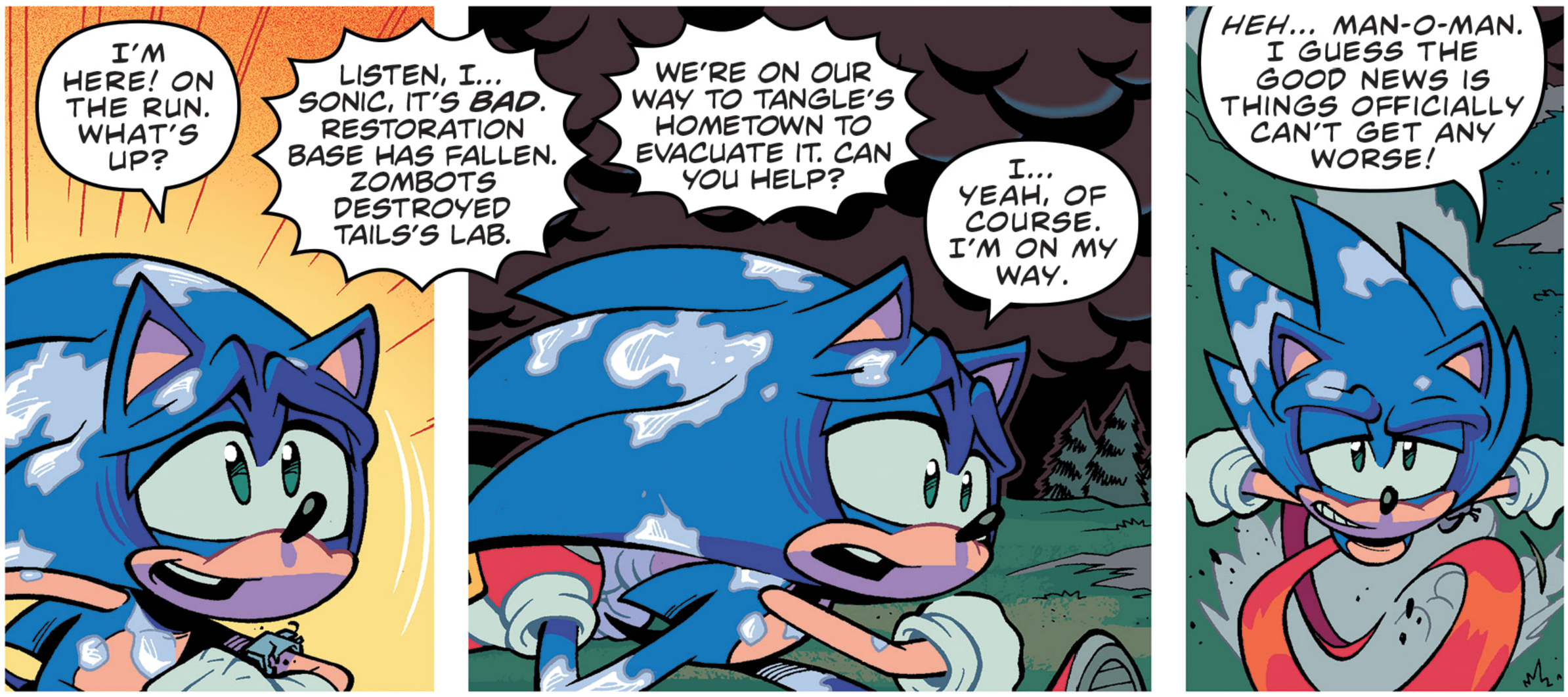


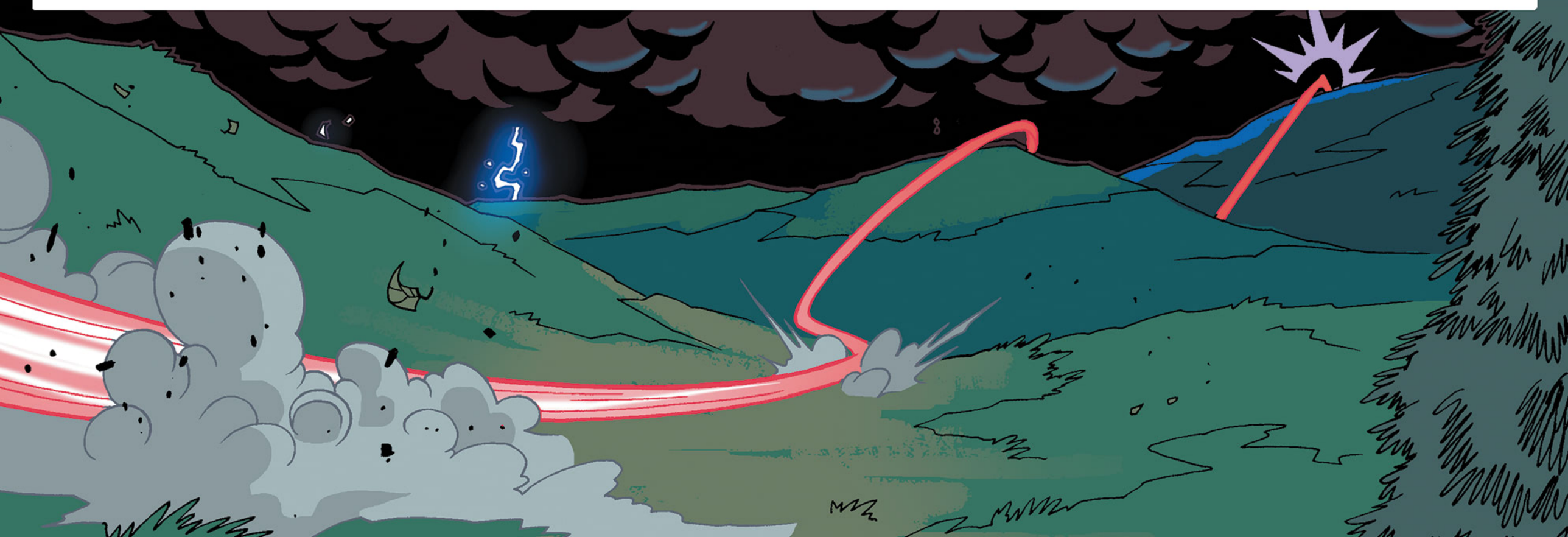
BWOSH

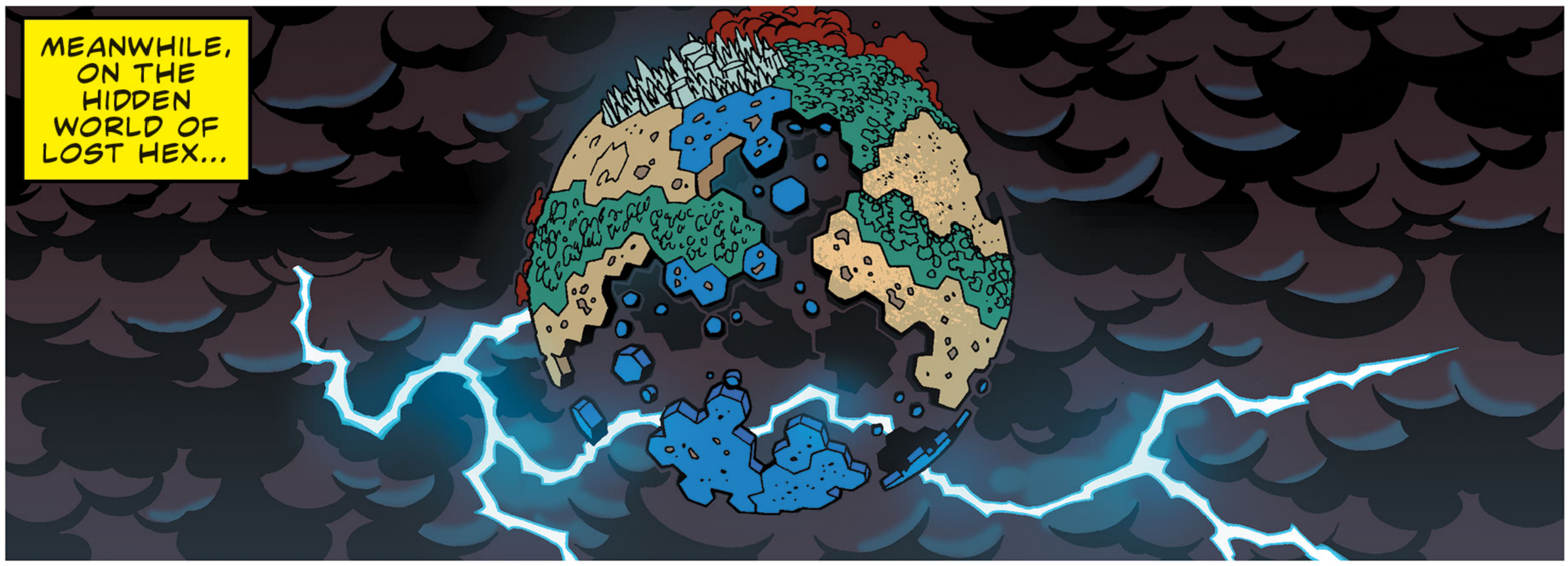



BUT I CAN'T GIVE UP. I'VE GOT TO PROTECT MY FRIENDS WHO ARE STILL SAFE. I'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO SAVE THE ONES WHO GOT INFECTED.
I'VE SCREWED UP— A LOT—BUT I STILL HAVE TIME TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT.


I FEEL LIKE I'M GOING TO COLLAPSE, THOUGH. IS THIS WHAT EVERYONE FEELS LIKE AFTER A RUN...?
SONIC. IT'S AMY. ARE YOU THERE?


I'M HERE! ON THE RUN. WHAT'S UP?
LISTEN, I... SONIC, IT'S BAD. RESTORATION BASE HAS FALLEN. ZOMBOTS DESTROYED TAILS'S LAB.
WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO TANGLE'S HOMETOWN TO EVACUATE IT. CAN YOU HELP?
I... YEAH, OF COURSE. I'M ON MY WAY.
HEH... MAN-O-MAN. I GUESS THE GOOD NEWS IS THINGS OFFICIALLY CAN'T GET ANY WORSE!




MEANWHILE, ON THE HIDDEN WORLD OF LOST HEX...

WE HAVE BEEN *TESTED*, MASTER ZIK. EGGMAN *USED* US AS HIS ENFORCERS. SONIC *HUMILIATED* US IN BATTLE.
THIS *WILL NOT* GO UNANSWERED.

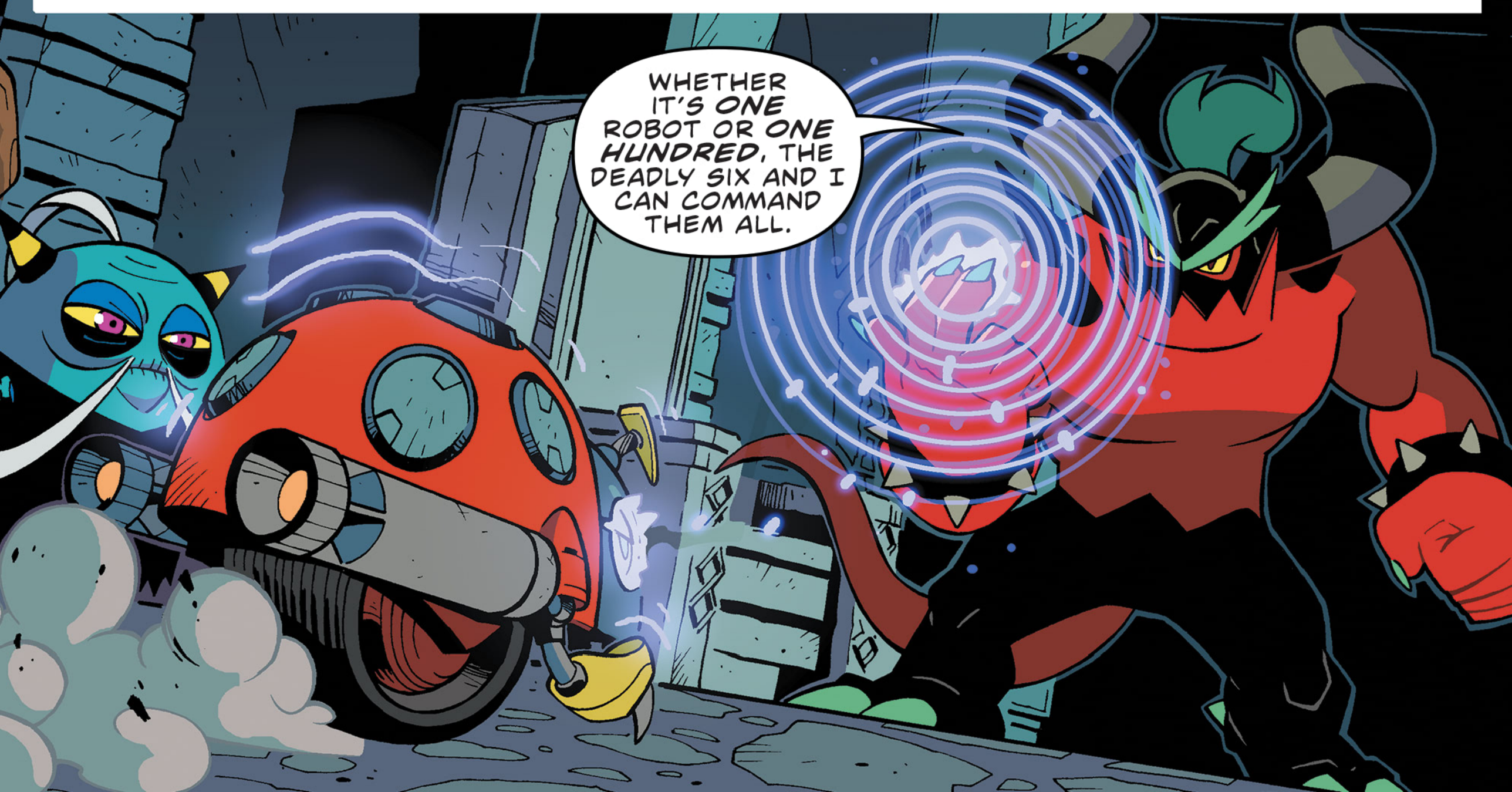
BUT VENGEANCE MUST BE *EXACT*. IT WAS WISE OF YOU TO HAVE US BIDE OUR TIME, LETTING OUR *HATRED* AND *ANGER* FESTER.

AND NOW OUR PATIENCE HAS PAID OFF.

DR. STARLINE.
ZAVOK.
YOU'VE RETURNED SOONER THAN I ANTICIPATED.

YES, WELL, TODAY'S EVENTS HAVE CEMENTED THE FACT YOUR ABILITIES ARE NEEDED.

YOU CAN EXERT YOUR WILL OVER MACHINES, CORRECT?
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NEED A DEMON-STRATION.


WHETHER IT'S ONE ROBOT OR ONE HUNDRED, THE DEADLY SIX AND I CAN COMMAND THEM ALL.

WE ARE ALL *VERY* EAGER TO SEE EGGMAN AGAIN. WHEN CAN WE BEGIN TO SERVE HIM?
...VERY SOON. I JUST NEED TO DO SOME LAST MINUTE PREPARATIONS ON MY END.

WE SHALL WAIT WITH BATED BREATH.
I'LL BE IN TOUCH.

THE NAÏVE FOOL. HE HAS NO IDEA WE WILL TAKE EGGMAN'S UNRULY ARMY AND TURN IT AGAINST HIM.
JUST SO, MASTER ZIK.

WE WILL JOURNEY TO THE LANDS BELOW. WE WILL TAKE COMMAND OF THESE "ZOMBOTS." WE WILL USE THEM TO DESTROY EGGMAN, DESTROY SONIC, AND DESTROY THE WORLD THEY HAVE WARRED OVER FOR SO LONG!
OUR VENGEANCE WILL BE MERCILESS! OUR VICTORY— *ABSOLUTE!*

THE FILES SAID EGGMAN USED THE CACOPHONOUS CONCH TO ENSLAVE THE ZETI, AND THAT THEY WERE EAGER TO TURN ON HIM.
ZAVOK IS PLANNING TO BETRAY ME THE MINUTE HE STEPS ABOARD.
BUT I'VE DONE MY RESEARCH. AND BEING AN AVID COLLECTOR OF EGGMAN'S PARAPHERNALIA...
...MEANS I'M ALREADY PREPARED.
TAKE NOTE, EGGMAN. THIS IS HOW YOU DO IT.

ART BY TRACY YARDLEY COLORS BY BRACARDI CURRY

ART BY JONATHAN GRAY COLORS BY REGGIE GRAHAM

THE FIRST TIME I CAME TO SPIRAL HILL VILLAGE, IT WAS UNDER ATTACK FROM EGGMAN.*
*STH#4
THINGS HAVEN'T CHANGED MUCH.

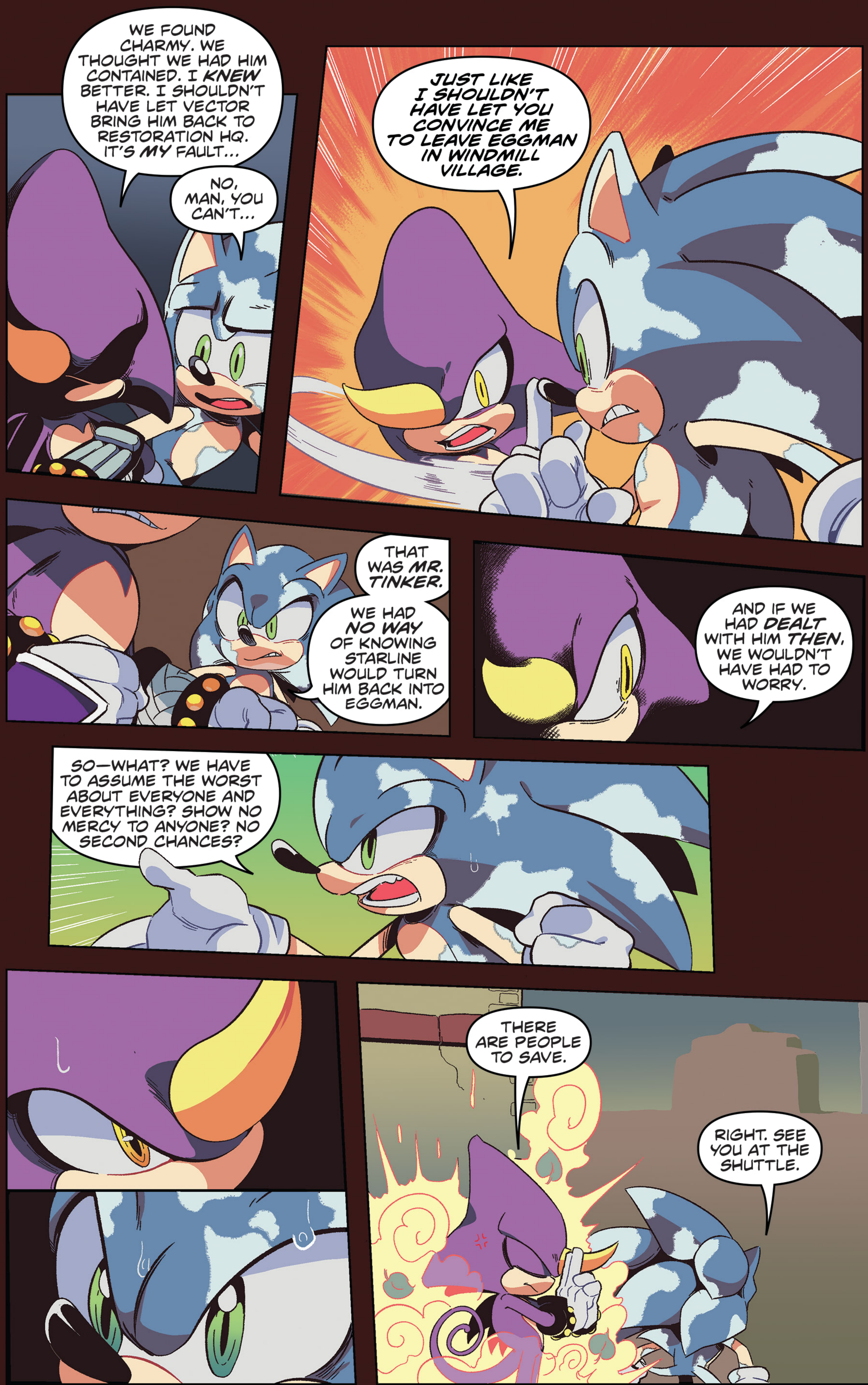
LOOKS LIKE THE RESTORATION CREW IS ALREADY HANDLING THE EVACUATION.
I BETTER CHECK IN WITH AMY AND SEE WHAT I CAN DO.
ON SECOND THOUGHT— ESPIO NEEDS BACK-UP!

WHOOSH

YO. THEY HAVE YOU FIGHTING THE WHOLE TOWN BY YOURSELF?
HEH. OUR NUMBERS HAVE GROWN THIN.

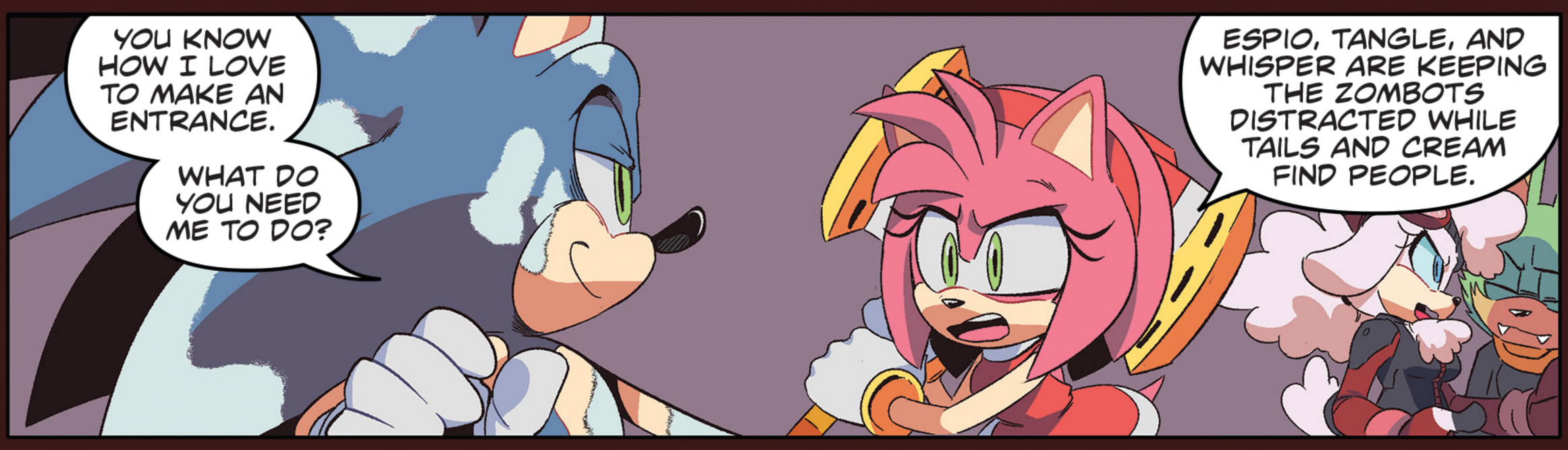
AMY AND GEMERL ARE WATCHING THE ESCAPE SHUTTLE. GEMERL IS SCANNING EVERYONE TO MAKE SURE THEY AREN'T INFECTED.
TAILS AND CREAM ARE AIRLIFTING ANYONE THEY CAN FIND.
LAST I HEARD, SILVER WAS MANAGING ICE PARADISE ON HIS OWN.

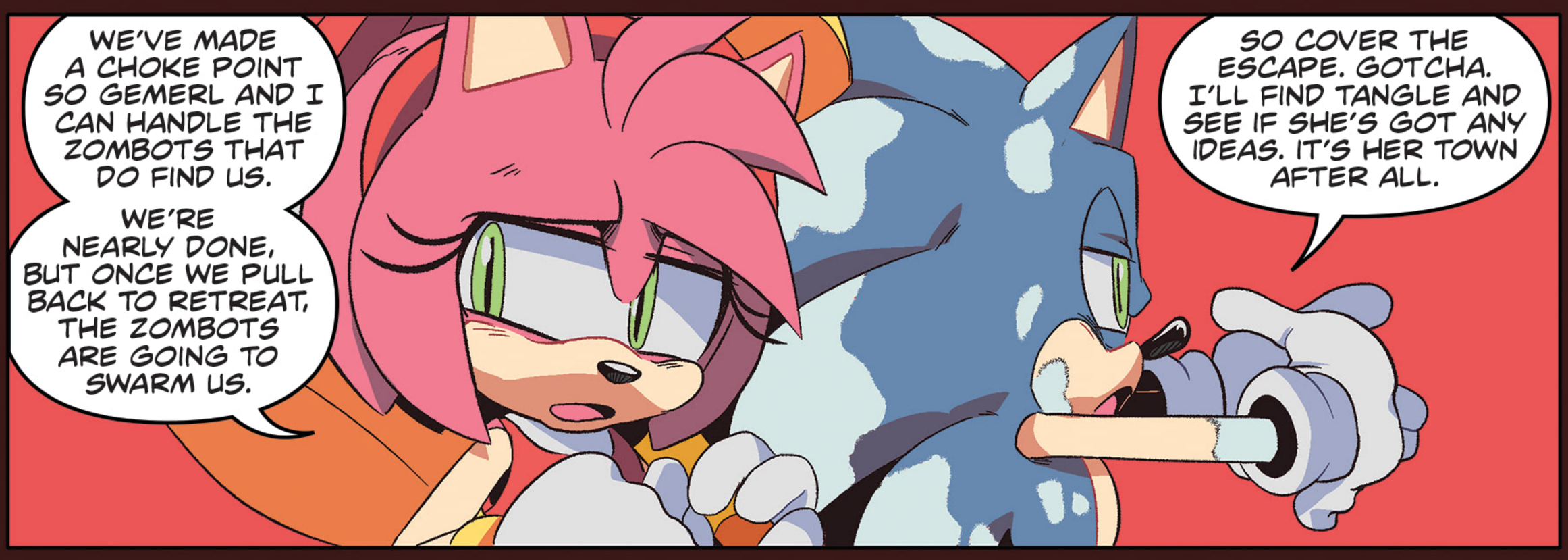
THAT LEAVES ME, TANGLE, AND WHISPER TO CONTAIN THE ZOMBOTS.
YIKES. WHERE'S VECTOR?


WE FOUND CHARMY. WE THOUGHT WE HAD HIM CONTAINED. I KNEW BETTER. I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET VECTOR BRING HIM BACK TO RESTORATION HQ. IT'S MY FAULT...
NO, MAN, YOU CAN'T...
JUST LIKE I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET YOU CONVINCE ME TO LEAVE EGGMAN IN WINDMILL VILLAGE.
THAT WAS MR. TINKER.
WE HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING STARLINE WOULD TURN HIM BACK INTO EGGMAN.
AND IF WE HAD DEALT WITH HIM THEN, WE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO WORRY.
SO—WHAT? WE HAVE TO ASSUME THE WORST ABOUT EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING? SHOW NO MERCY TO ANYONE? NO SECOND CHANCES?
THERE ARE PEOPLE TO SAVE.
RIGHT. SEE YOU AT THE SHUTTLE.

SHUNK

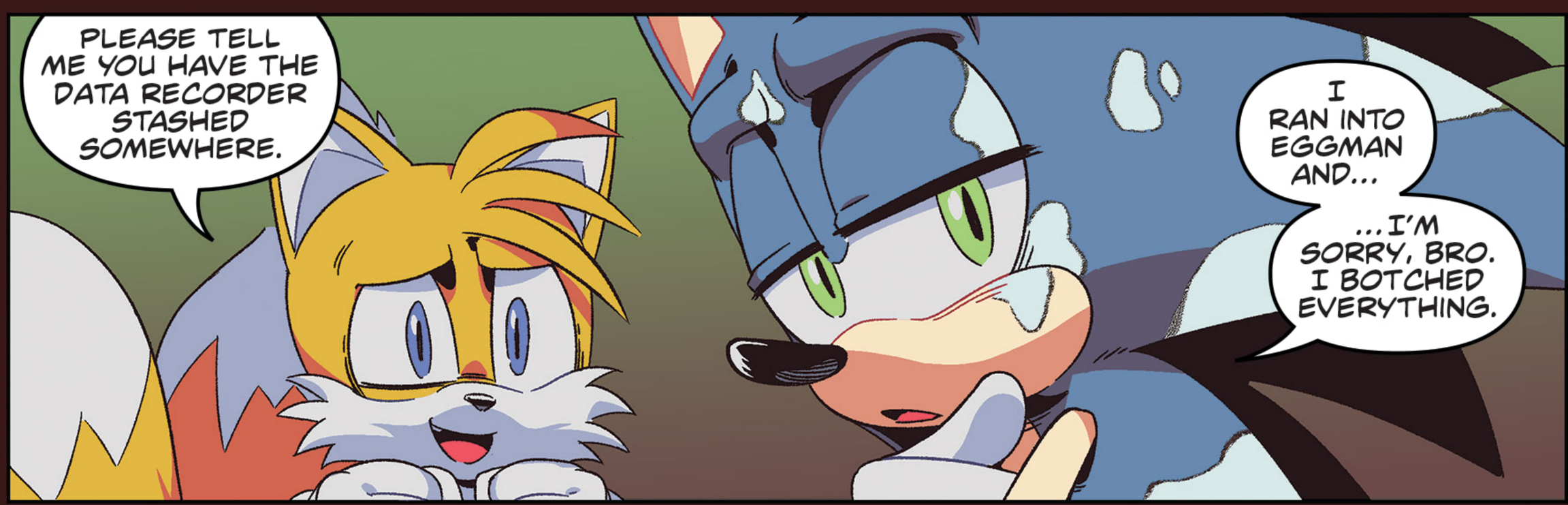
HEY AMY!
SONIC! FASHIONABLY LATE, AS USUAL.


YOU KNOW HOW I LOVE TO MAKE AN ENTRANCE.
WHAT DO YOU NEED ME TO DO?
ESPIO, TANGLE, AND WHISPER ARE KEEPING THE ZOMBOTS DISTRACTED WHILE TAILS AND CREAM FIND PEOPLE.


WE'VE MADE A CHOKE POINT SO GEMERL AND I CAN HANDLE THE ZOMBOTS THAT DO FIND US.
WE'RE NEARLY DONE, BUT ONCE WE PULL BACK TO RETREAT, THE ZOMBOTS ARE GOING TO SWARM US.
SO COVER THE ESCAPE. GOTCHA. I'LL FIND TANGLE AND SEE IF SHE'S GOT ANY IDEAS. IT'S HER TOWN AFTER ALL.

HOLD UP, SONIC!
YO, TAILS! HEY, CREAM!

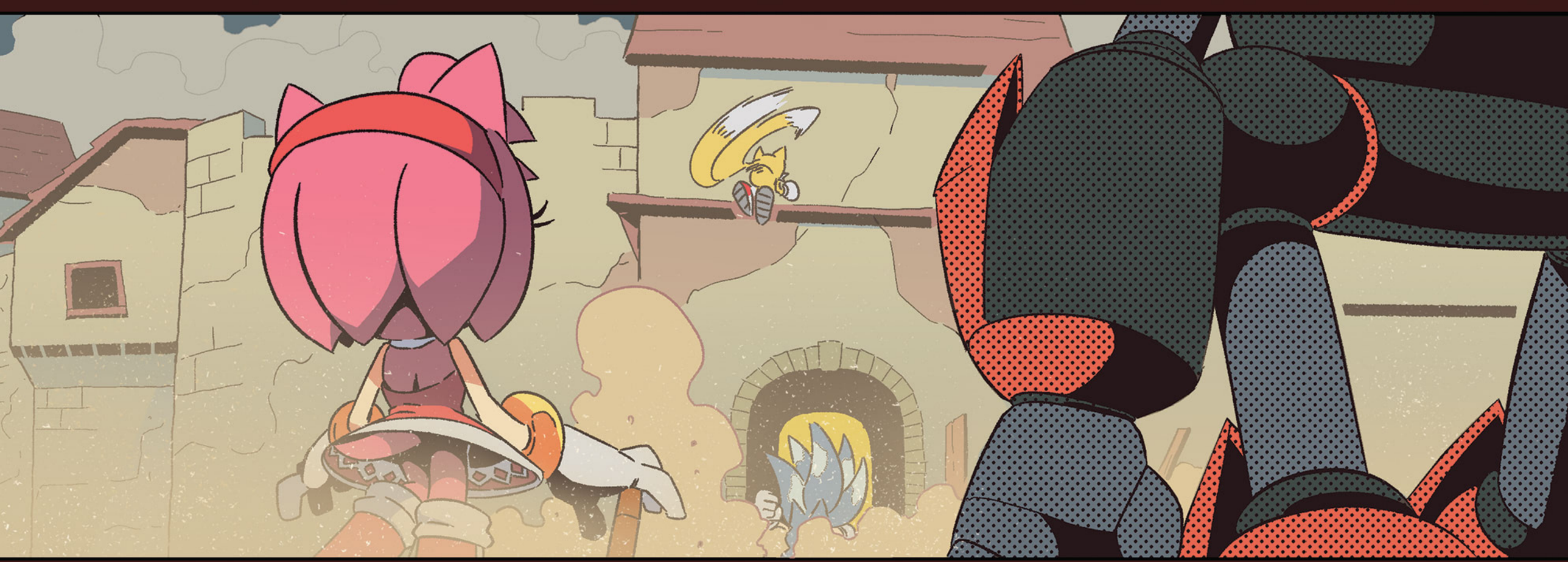
H'LO, MR. SONIC.

HER MOTHER HELD BACK ZOMBOTS SO WE COULD ESCAPE. CREAM SAW EVERYTHING.

PLEASE TELL ME YOU HAVE THE DATA RECORDER STASHED SOMEWHERE.
I RAN INTO EGGMAN AND...
...I'M SORRY, BRO. I BOTCHED EVERYTHING.

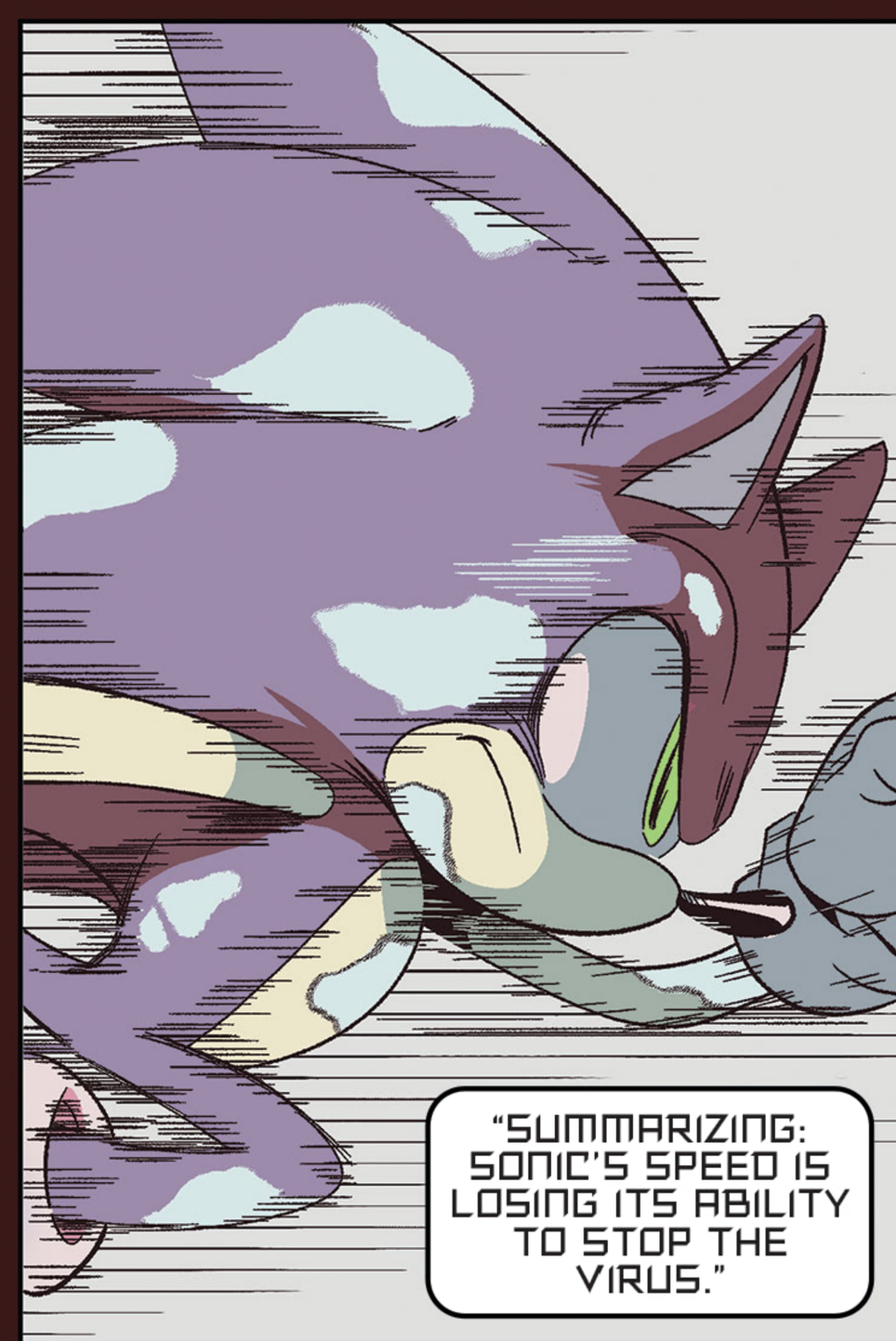
I-IT'S FINE. WITHOUT MY LAB OR THE HEADQUARTERS, I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SYNTHESIZE A VACCINE A-ANYWAY...

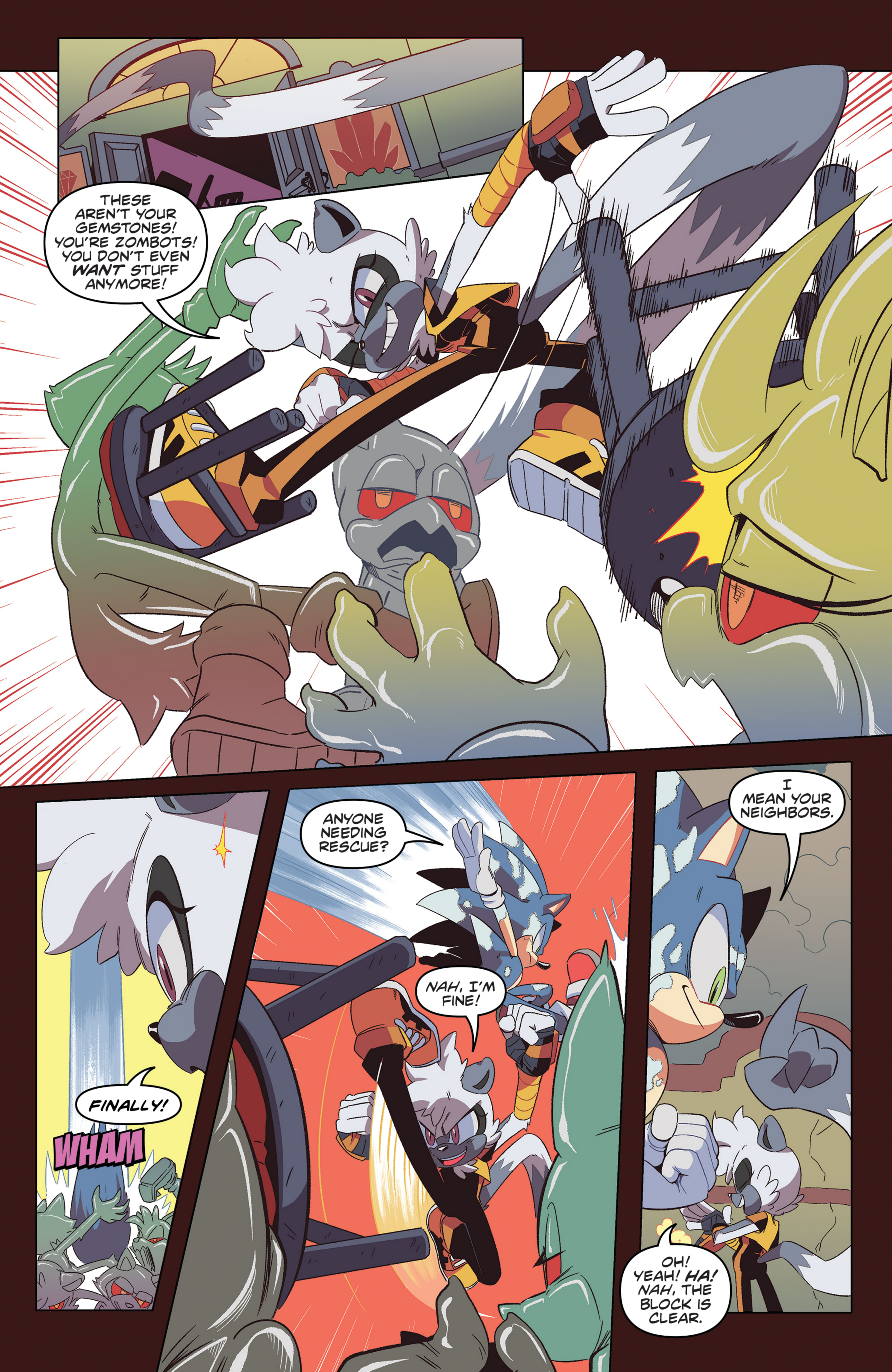
ALL RIGHT... THEN LET'S FOCUS ON THE "NOW." TAILS?
RIGHT. ≡SNIFF≡ WE COULDN'T FIND ANYONE ELSE. EVERYONE'S BECOME ZOMBOTS.

THEN IT'S TIME TO GO. GO SIGNAL THE OTHERS TO RETREAT.
RIGHT. I'LL FIND TANGLE AND COORDINATE WITH HER.
I'LL FIND ESPIO AND WHISPER, THEN.



AMY ROSE. I PERFORMED A SCAN ON SONIC.
HE'S INFECTED. WE'VE ALL KNOWN THAT FOR A WHILE.
CORRECT. HOWEVER, I RAN CALCULATIONS ON THE LEVEL OF INFECTION HE EXHIBITED. IT IS HIGHER THAN PREVIOUS ESTIMATES SHOULD ALLOW.
IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY, GEMERL. WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT?


"SUMMARIZING: SONIC'S SPEED IS LOSING ITS ABILITY TO STOP THE VIRUS."


THESE AREN'T YOUR GEMSTONES! YOU'RE ZOMBOTS! YOU DON'T EVEN WANT STUFF ANYMORE!
FINALLY!
WHAM
ANYONE NEEDING RESCUE?
NAH, I'M FINE!
I MEAN YOUR NEIGHBORS.
OH! YEAH! HA! NAH, THE BLOCK IS CLEAR.

AMY'S CALLING FOR RETREAT. BUT THE MINUTE WE STOP CAUSING A RUCKUS ALL OVER TOWN...
THE ZOMBOTS WILL HEAD FOR THE BIG, NOISY SHUTTLE. NOT GOOD.

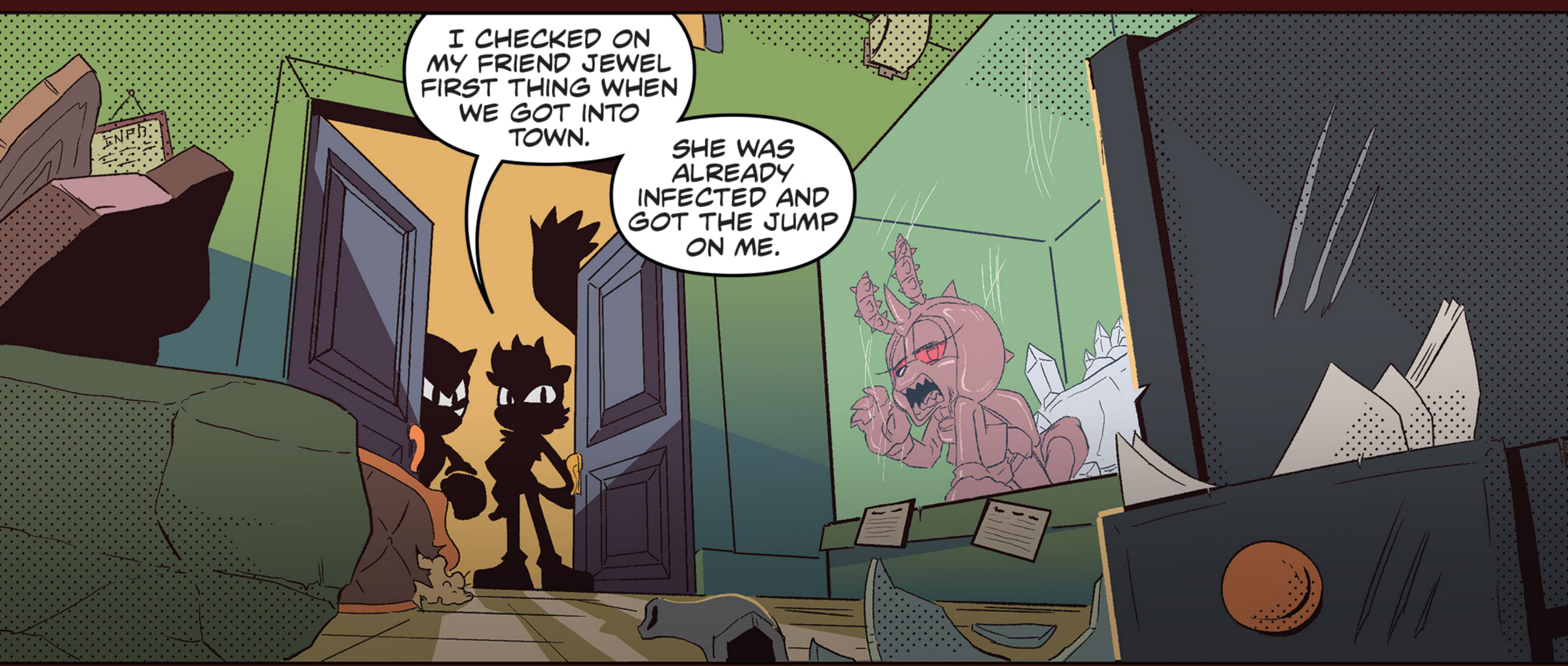
THEY BLOCKED EVERYTHING OFF EXCEPT ONE AVENUE. ANY IDEAS ON HOW TO PLUG THE BOTTLENECK?
I SURE DO!

STEP ONE! YOU PICK ME UP.

STEP TWO! I WRAP MY TAIL AROUND ONE OF THE LAMPPOSTS!

STEP THREE! YOU WIND US BETWEEN THE LAMPPOSTS AND USE MY TAIL AS A TRIPWIRE!
YEAH, THAT COULD WORK. EXCEPT FOR— Y'KNOW—YOU GETTING INFECTED!

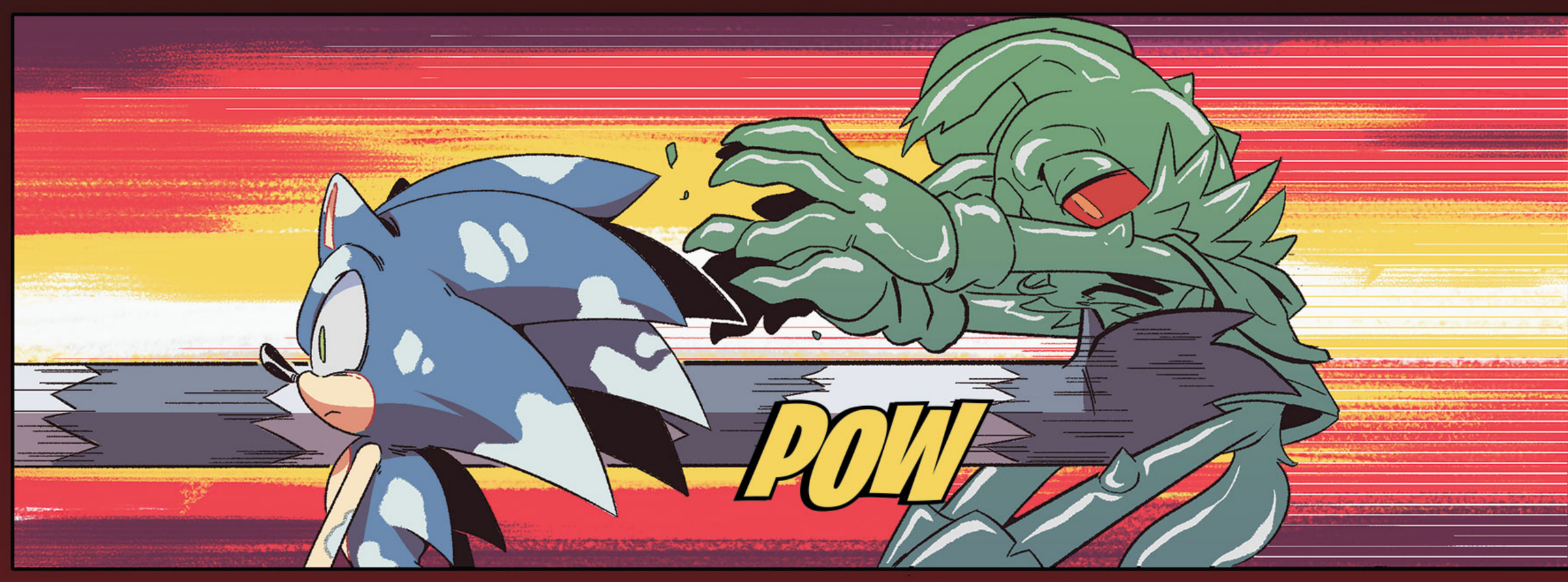
OH, THAT? PFFFT! ALREADY GOT IT COVERED!

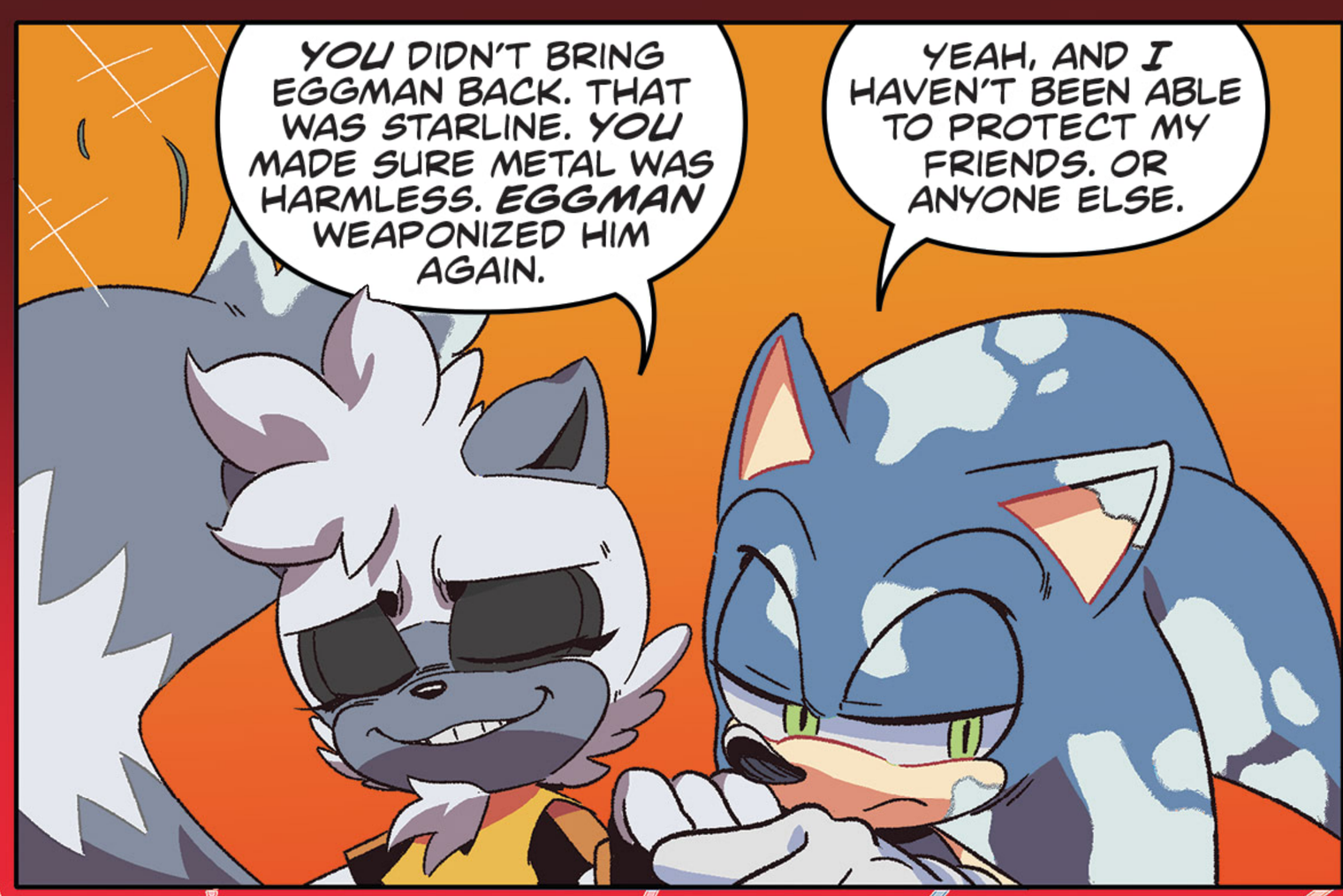

I CHECKED ON MY FRIEND JEWEL FIRST THING WHEN WE GOT INTO TOWN.
SHE WAS ALREADY INFECTED AND GOT THE JUMP ON ME.

I'VE BEEN HOLDING BACK, TRYING TO KEEP FROM TURNING TOO FAST.
BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LAST MUCH LONGER.

TANGLE... I'M SORRY...
FOR WHAT? IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.

ISN'T IT? MAYBE IF I'D LISTENED TO SHADOW AND... OR IF I HADN'T LET METAL SONIC GO...


POW


YOU DIDN'T BRING EGGMAN BACK. THAT WAS STARLINE. YOU MADE SURE METAL WAS HARMLESS. EGGMAN WEAPONIZED HIM AGAIN.
YEAH, AND I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO PROTECT MY FRIENDS. OR ANYONE ELSE.

YEAH? THEN I GUESS NOBODY'S GUARDING THAT SHUTTLE FULL OF NOTHING?
TANGLE, YOU... HEH. YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LET THIS GET TO YOU, ARE YOU?

NEVER!

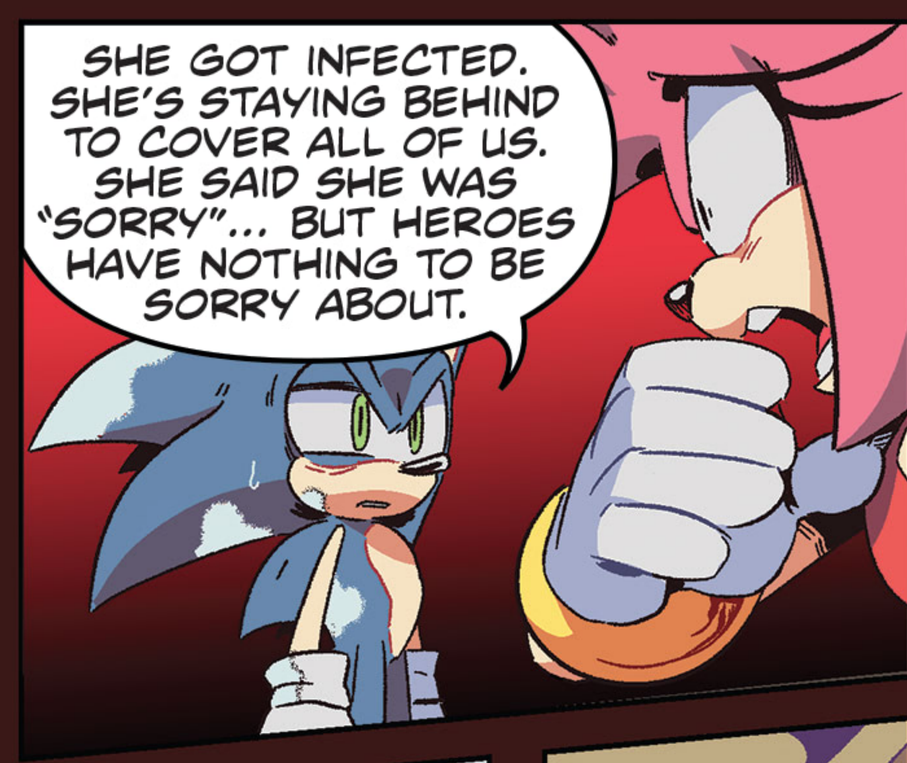
BECAUSE YOU'RE SONIC THE HEDGEHOG. YOU'LL SET THIS RIGHT. I KNOW YOU WILL.
NOW, LESS MOPING AND MORE MOVING!
YES, MA'AM!

WOO-HOO!
OKAY-OKAY-OKAY! NO MORE! YOU'RE GONNA PULL MY BUTT OFF!

THAT SHOULD HOLD. LONG ENOUGH FOR YOU TO SKEDADDLE, AT LEAST.
SO... UM... TELL THE OTHERS I'M SORRY.
ESPECIALLY WHISPER. SHE'S GONNA TAKE IT REALLY HARD.
SURE THING. THANKS FOR EVERYTHING.
ALRIGHT! ALRIGHT! GET MOVING!
TANGLE...
I TOLD YOU, I'VE GOT THIS! GO!

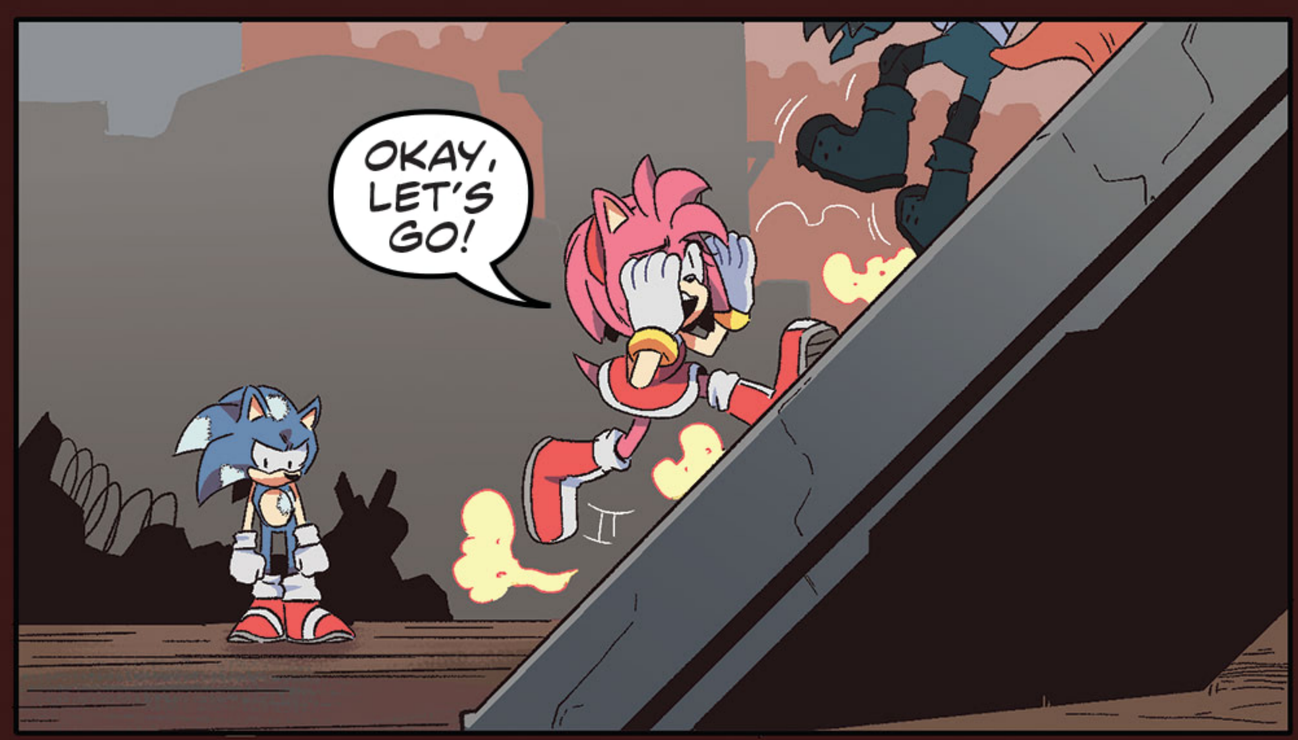
SNIFF
LET'S GO THEN!
YOU MIGHT AS WELL TURN BACK! YOU USED TO BE MY NEIGHBORS! YOU KNOW I WON'T LET YOU PAST!

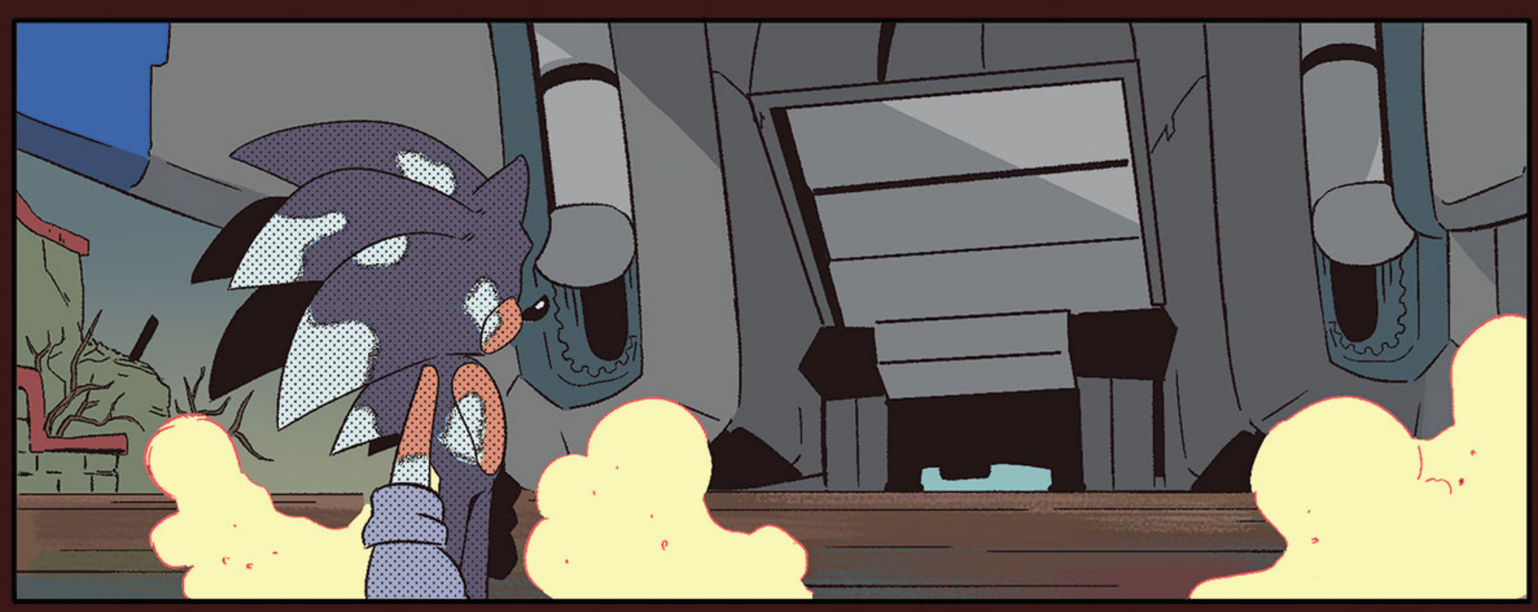
LET'S GET GOING. I'LL RIDE ON THE OUTSIDE.
WHERE'S TANGLE?

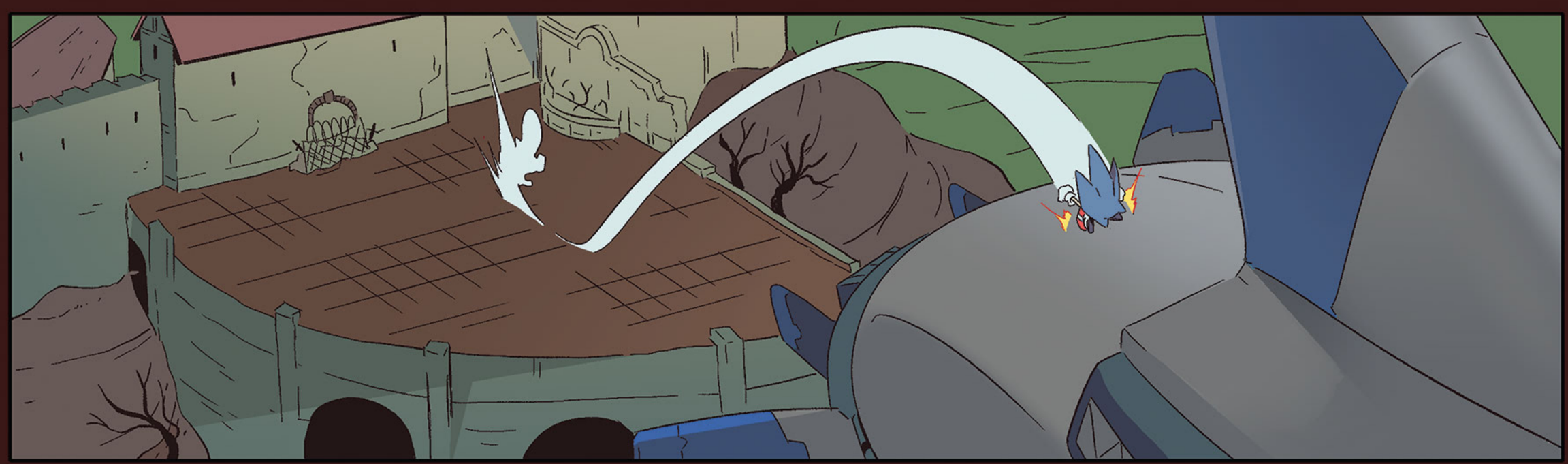

SHE GOT INFECTED. SHE'S STAYING BEHIND TO COVER ALL OF US. SHE SAID SHE WAS "SORRY"... BUT HEROES HAVE NOTHING TO BE SORRY ABOUT.

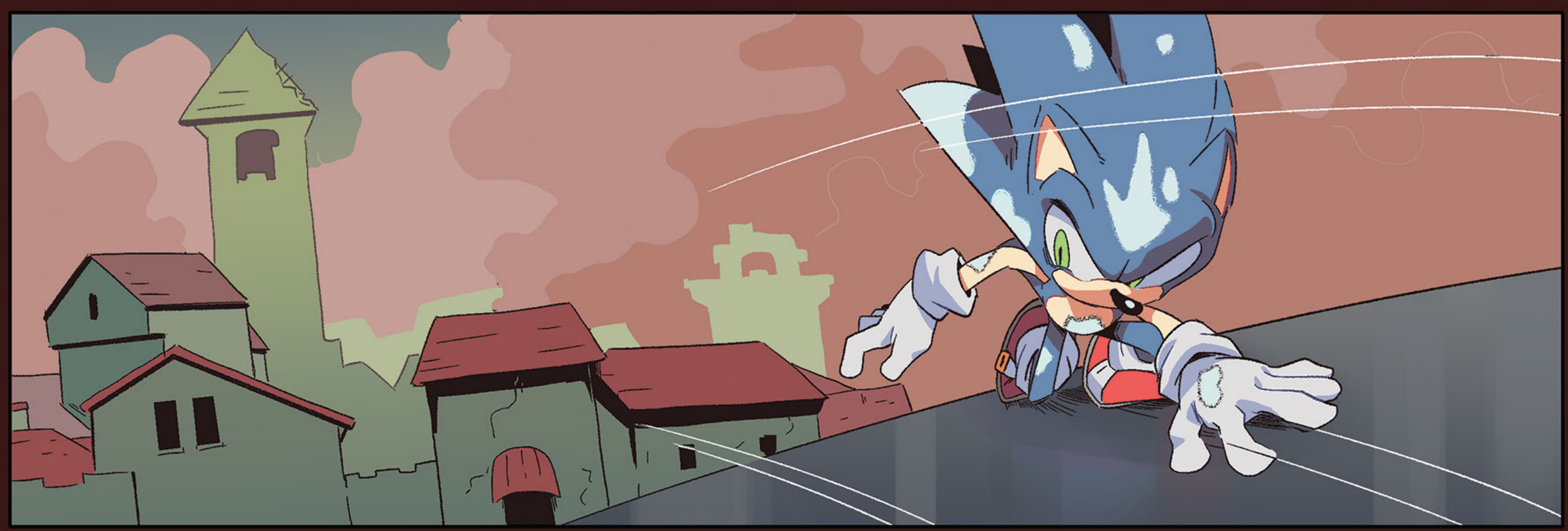
TANGLE!
WHISPER! DON'T!
SONIC— HELP ME!
I CAN'T!

DON'T–!


OKAY, LET'S GO!







DON'T KEEP ME WAITING TOO LONG...

HEY! I'M NOT DONE YET!

YEE! OH, THAT'S UNPLEASANT!

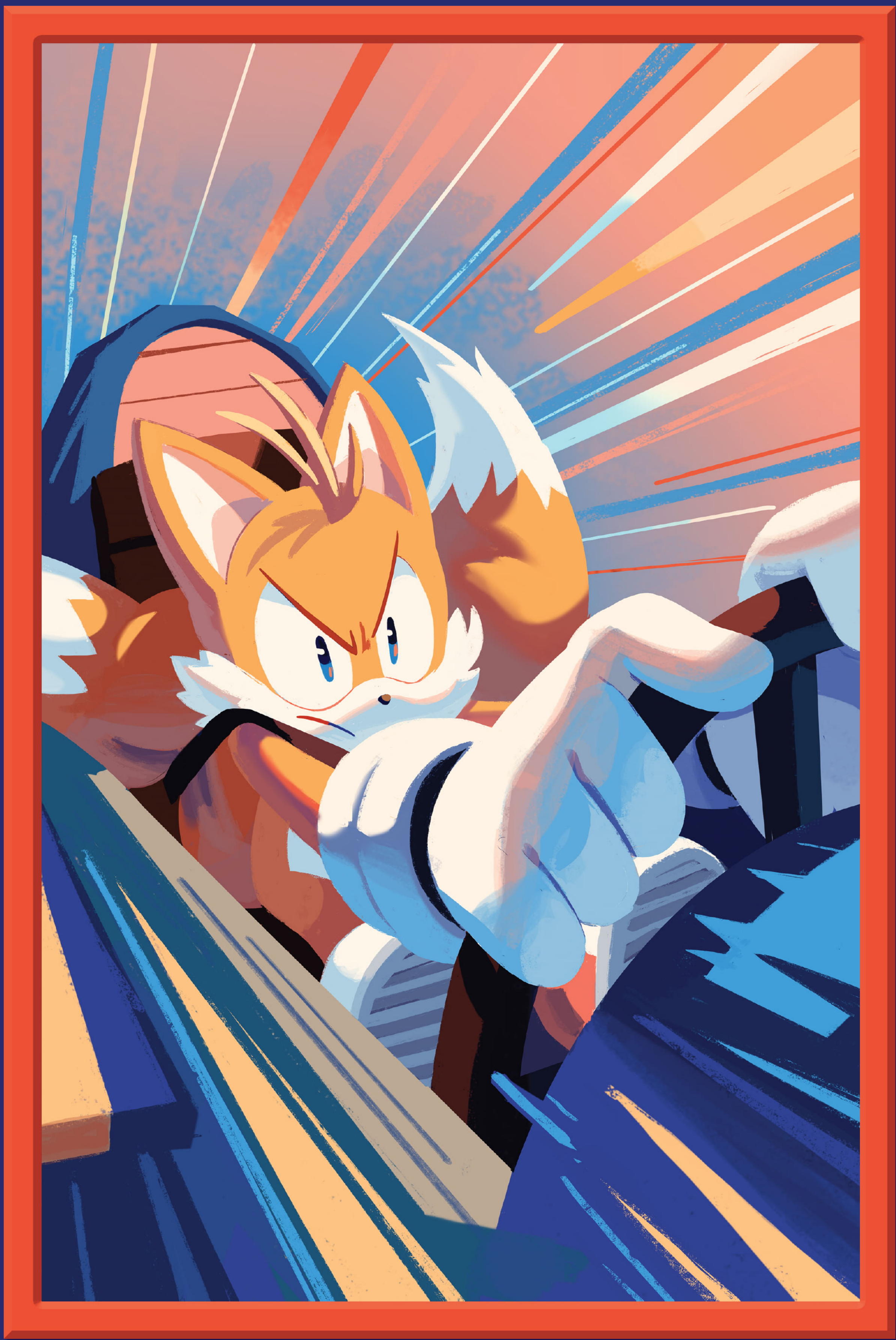
C-C'MON! I'M S-STILL STANDING!

STILL FIGHTING!

STILL—!

LATER— ABOARD THE FACESHIP.
DOCTOR, I HAVE FOUND A SOLUTION TO THE ONGOING PROBLEM OF NOT BEING ABLE TO CONTROL THE ZOMBOTS.
I TOLD YOU I'D FIGURE SOMETHING OUT. QUIT PESTERING ME ABOUT IT!
NO, SIR. I INSIST.
NEXT TIME: FROM BAD TO WORSE!

ART BY **AARON HAMMERSTROM**



ART BY **NATHALIE FOURDRAINE**

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SONIC™ THE HEDGEHOG

THE LAST MINUTE

SEGA®

SONIC™ THE HEDGEHOG

CAN SONIC OUTRUN A DISEASE THAT TURNS EVERYONE INTO ROBOTIC ZOMBIES?

The world has fallen to the Metal Virus, a manufactured plague that transforms all it infects into robotic zombies at Dr. Eggman's command. Even Sonic the Hedgehog has been infected, though his speed has allowed him to keep the virus at bay. Now, with the population more infected than not and the virus constantly spreading, Sonic and his friends in the Restoration launch a desperate plan to cure the world... but when things go awry, it all comes down to the last minute!

By writer **Ian Flynn** and artists **Lamar Wells, Reggie Graham, Jennifer Hernandez, Priscilla Tramontano, Jack Lawrence,** and **Adam Bryce Thomas.**

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